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Publication of the U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization

October 6, 2017

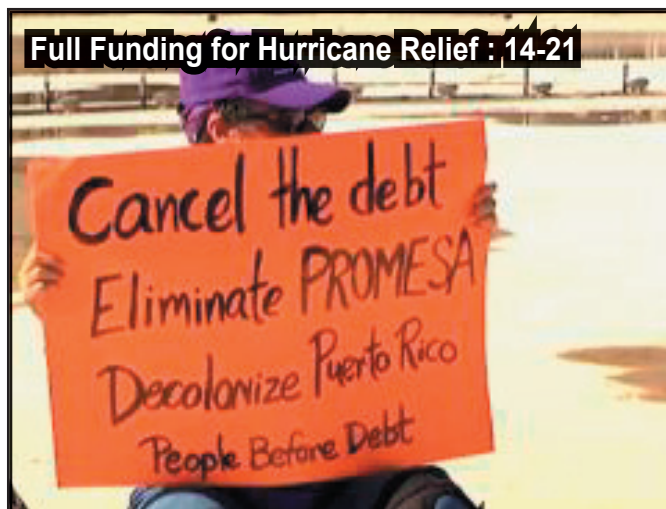
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Troops Home Now: 1-4



No War Against Korea : 5-13



Full Funding for Hurricane Relief : 14-21

NATIONAL DAYS OF ACTION

**End Criminal War
Against Afghanistan
All U.S. Troops Home Now**

October 6 marks the 16th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, a criminal war of aggression that has devastated the country and killed untold numbers of children, women and men.

Demonstrations against the war are taking place in major cities and at many universities on national days of action October 6-8. Demands to end all U.S. wars, including that

All Troops Home Now • 3

SIGN A PEACE TREATY

**Oppose War Against Korea!
Accept a Freeze for a Freeze**

The U.S. continues to threaten war against Korea, with Trump openly saying the U.S. will "totally destroy" the country. While he directed the threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), such an effort to destroy her would

destroy all of Korea. Korea is and has long been one nation, one people, currently striving for peaceful reunification and development. This is evident in the many actions in the south against U.S. bases and

No War Against Korea • 5

NO TO MILITARIZATION OF RELIEF EFFORTS

**Full Funding for Hurricane
Relief Efforts in Puerto
Rico, Florida, Texas**

New York City and Buffalo's Puerto Rican community, alongside that of Boston and Chicago, and joined by all those concerned across the country, have rallied support for the millions contending with no power, no drinking

water and the broad devastation across Puerto Rico. It is the people in the U.S. and Puerto Rico who are setting up facebook pages to provide information about conditions in various towns, reach out

Full Funding for Hurricane Relief • 14

October edition of ***Voice of Revolution***

Editorials & Statements

- *End Criminal War Against Afghanistan! All U.S. Troops Home Now* 1
- *Oppose War Against Korea! Accept a Freeze for a Freeze* 1
- *Full Funding for Hurricane Relief Efforts in Puerto Rico, Florida, Texas*.... 1

All Troops Home Now

- *No to War Call to Action* 3
- *Recent Antiwar Actions (photos)* 4

No Sanctions, No War Against Korea

- *UN Must Appoint Special Envoy to Defuse Threat of War
on Korean Peninsula* 5
- *Trump's War on the Korean People* 6
- *Oppose the Ninth Unjust and Illegal UN Security Council Resolution
Imposed on the DPRK!* 10
- *Correcting History: Five Things No One Wants to Say About Korea*..... 11

Fully Fund Hurricane Relief

- *Puerto Rico Continues Its Struggle For Independence* 16
- *Memento Mori: a Requiem for Puerto Rico* 17
- *Deaths in Puerto Rico are Underreported* 19
- *FEMA Eliminates Data on Puerto Rico's Lack of Power, Water* 20
- *Nuclear Plants Plus Hurricanes: Disasters Waiting to Happen*..... 21

Anthem Protests Target U.S. State

- *Trump Comments Are A Demand for Loyalty* 22
- *Broad Protest by NFL Players, Kaepernick's Fraternity,
WNBA Women and Many More* 23

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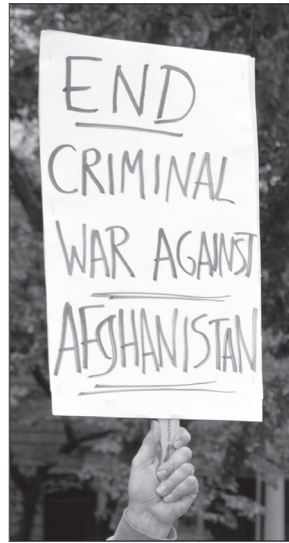
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I • All Troops Home Now

against Yemen, Iraq and Syria, and to reject war against Korea are being raised. A main call is: *All U.S. Troops Home Now!* It is bringing troops home, not increasing their number that contributes to peace and security. It is up to the people of Afghanistan to decide their government and future, not the U.S. The continued war increases violence, anarchy and insecurity, as the past 16 years have shown. It has solved no problem, as what is needed is a political resolution, not a military one. The U.S. resorts to war and violence as it refuses to modernize democracy and must block the peoples from decision making power, whether at home or abroad.

A main aim in demonstrating is to give public expression to the anti-war stand of the majority. It is a means to reject the massive funding for the Pentagon now being debated in Congress, with an additional \$80 billion planned, for a yearly budget of \$700 billion. It is a means to stand up for principle, which is that wars of aggression are crimes to be punished and U.S. occupation of Afghanistan must end now. It is also a means to unite in action, bringing together the many groups and forces. Taking united action is the means by which to build working relations and strengthen the unity and organized character of resistance.

Strengthening the anti-war movement through mobilizing public support and working together in action is especially important as the U.S. increases its plans for more war. Voice of Revolution urges students, teachers and all concerned to join in taking a stand: *U.S. Out of Afghanistan Now! All U.S. Troops Home Now!* Many are also denouncing U.S. threats of war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).



Diplomacy, including signing a peace treaty and accepting the Korean's proposal of a freeze for a freeze, with Koreans freezing nuclear development and the U.S. freezing its massive war games, is the way forward.

In his speech at the United Nations, Trump indicated the U.S. is preparing for more war. He specifically threatened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea saying, if the U.S. is "forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea." He then threatened the entire world, claiming, "From now on, our security interests will dictate the length and scope of military operation, not arbitrary benchmarks and timetables set up by politicians. I have also totally changed the rules of engagement in our fight against the Taliban and other terrorist groups." This means the U.S. will expand its

attacks and justify use of drones and Special Forces anywhere, anytime, in the name of fighting "terrorist groups." Sovereignty is not the right of each country to determine its own affairs, but the "right" of the U.S. to dictate and decide the government in each country.

It is clear that the U.S. is planning and preparing more war, itself a crime. This brings the need to discuss and organize for an anti-war government to the fore. Organizing for an anti-war government is a unifying aim and one that directly contributes to the demand of the peoples here and worldwide for peace. It is necessary to make the U.S. a factor for peace. In demonstrating together, let us also discuss the need for an anti-war government.

*U.S. Out of Afghanistan Now! All U.S. Troops Home Now!
No War Against Korea!*

No to War Call to Action

No to War

October 6, 2017, marks the 16th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan – the longest foreign war in U.S. history.

The Afghan war, which has been a thoroughly bipartisan effort, was originally railed against by Donald Trump when he was running for president. He claimed to be against U.S. troop involvement in Afghanistan. Now he is moving forward with a "secret" plan of escalation that will also include Pakistan. He says the secrecy is to keep the "enemy" from knowing his plans, but it also keeps the U.S. people from knowing what he is doing in our name and from judging the human costs for the people of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States.

What we do know is that military escalation has repeatedly failed to bring peace in Afghanistan. It has caused more destruction and more deaths of civilians and soldiers alike and has cost trillions of dollars that could be spent on meeting basic needs here at home while repairing the destruction carried out abroad.

Trump also emboldens the war machine here in the U.S.

against Black and Brown people and immigrants by fanning white supremacy and xenophobia and continuing the militarization of the police and ICE to incite racially-motivated violence and justify repression, including mass incarceration and mass deportations. U.S. wars of aggression and militarism abroad go hand-in-hand with increased state repression and militarization of the police state here at home.

Trump's new escalation comes at a time when there is no end in sight to the continuous wars, including drone and mercenary warfare, throughout the region and when he is threatening military action against Venezuela, North Korea, Russia, Iran and other countries.

Therefore, we the undersigned antiwar leaders in the U.S. are calling for non-violent protests in cities across the country during the week of the 16th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. We appeal to all antiwar organizations in the United States and around the world to join us.

RECENT ANTIWAR ACTIONS



I • No War Against Korea

occupation and for reunification and improving relations south and north. It is evident in the calls by the DPRK for the U.S. to sign a peace treaty and normalize relations. Every effort is being made to find a political non-military solution — but the U.S. refuses.

The U.S. continues to carry out the largest military war games in the world targeting the DPRK and specifically conducting practice runs for a nuclear first strike. All of these are crimes against the peace, which the UN Security Council should address, as called for by the DPRK. Instead, the U.S. has pushed through yet another unjust and illegal resolution against the DPRK for its nuclear tests (see p.6). The DPRK has every right to defend herself.

The U.S. itself tests its nuclear arsenal and is planning a \$1.5 trillion upgrade of its nuclear weaponry. It is the one country that has used nuclear weapons, currently has the largest arsenal yet claims it is the DPRK that poses a threat. It is not the DPRK but the U.S. that has occupation troops around the world, that has a long history of aggression, that openly commits crimes against the peace, as Trump did in his speech at the UN and as the war games conducted against Korea repeatedly do.

If the U.S. were interested in eliminating nuclear weapons, it would accept the repeated proposal of the DPRK for a nuclear free zone, on the peninsula and in the region. It does not. The DPRK in the current situation has also proposed a freeze for a freeze. It will freeze its nuclear weapon development if the U.S. freezes its massive war games. Certainly such an action is a step



towards peace and security for all — yet the U.S. refuses.

The U.S. does not want peace and security for Koreans, it wants continued occupation and a means to control all of Korea and further threaten China. It does not want to see a country chart its own course and defy U.S. dictate, as the DPRK has always done.

For all those concerned about peace and supporting political, not military solutions, it is vital to stand against war against Korea and demand that the U.S. sign a peace treaty, end the war games and accept a freeze for a freeze. More violence and war aggravates problems, it does not solve them. The fact that the U.S. threatens and pursues aggression indicates it has no solutions and can only resort to use of force. The U.S. is the source of the problems and standing against war and for an anti-war government embracing the demand of the majority for peace is a way forward.

GLOBAL WOMEN LEADERS CALL ON UN SECRETARY-GENERAL GUTERRES

UN Must Appoint Special Envoy to Defuse Threat of War on Korean Peninsula

Women Cross DMZ

In response to President Trump's threat "to totally destroy North Korea," at the United Nations General Assembly, nearly 300 women leaders and several major women's organizations from 45 countries, including South Korea, Japan, Guam and the United States, called on the UN Secretary-General to immediately appoint a Special Envoy to de-escalate the threat of war now facing the Korean Peninsula. They include former elected officials, Nobel Peace Laureates, leading academics, prominent activists, best selling authors, award-winning filmmakers and prominent philanthropists.

The women leaders also urge the UN Secretary-General to take seriously North Korea's security concerns by supporting a widely backed proposal for North Korea to freeze its nuclear and missile tests in exchange for the United States and South Korea halting its annual war drills, the world's largest ever, which rehearse surgical strikes against North Korea, "decapitation," and regime change.

"About a quarter million people in Nagasaki and Hiroshima were instantly killed by U.S. atomic bombs," writes Kozue Akiyoshi, Professor at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, and International President of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). "The Japanese people do not support warmongering by Trump or Shinzo Abe, both of whom are using the North Korean nuclear threat to justify more militarization, such as revoking Article 9, which threatens the security of the entire region."

"Diplomacy does not mean placing embargoes on seafood and textiles that will inflict more misery on the north Korean people," says Ewa Eriksson Fortier, a Swedish humanitarian worker with extensive experience in north Korea. "Diplomacy means engagement that leads to peace and improved relations. President Trump should look to South Korean President Moon's recent decision to allocate \$8 million to ongoing humanitarian needs in north Korea."

“When Mr. Trump threatens to annihilate 25 million people in north Korea, he is endangering 51 million South Koreans,” said Jeong-ae Ahn-Kim, representative of Women Making Peace in South Korea. “Millions of South Koreans have family in the north. When he threatens them, he threatens us.”

“I doubt the three Generals in the White House approved President Trump’s call “to totally destroy North Korea,”” said Ann Wright, retired U.S. Army Colonel and former U.S. diplomat. “They know that there is no military solution to this crisis just as there hasn’t been one in Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria. U.S. military intervention will not and cannot solve a political problem.”

After claiming four million lives, the Korean War was halted on July 27, 1953 when military leaders from the United States, North Korea and China signed the Armistice Agreement. They promised to return within three months to forge a peace agree-

ment (Armistice Agreement, Article 4, Paragraph 60), which has yet to be fulfilled.

Women leaders call on UN Secretary-General Guterres to initiate a peace process and to take immediate steps to formally end the Korean War with a Peace Treaty. This would lead to greater security in Korea and counter the escalating militarization in the region and the global proliferation of nuclear weapons.

(Women Cross DMZ is an organization led by women working globally for peace in Korea. In May 2015, on the 70th anniversary of the division of Korea, Women Cross DMZ led a historic women’s peace walk across the De-Militarized Zone from North to South Korea to draw global attention to the urgent need to end the Korean War with a peace treaty, reunite divided families, and ensure women’s leadership in peacebuilding. www.womencrossdmz.org)

Trump’s War on the Korean People

Gregory Elich

Amid renewed talk by the Trump administration of a military option against North Korea, one salient fact goes unnoticed. The United States is already at war with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK – the formal name for North Korea). It is doing so through non-military means, with the aim of inducing economic collapse. In a sense, the policy is a continuation of the Obama administration’s ‘strategic patience’ on steroids, in that it couples a refusal to engage in diplomacy with the piling on of sanctions that constitute collective punishment of the entire north Korean population.

We are told that UN Security Council resolution 2375, passed on September 11, was “watered down” so as to obtain Chinese and Russian agreement. In relative terms, this is true, in that the original draft as submitted by the United States called for extreme measures such as a total oil embargo. However, Western media give the impression that the resolution as passed is mild or mainly symbolic. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The resolution, in tandem with previous sanction votes and in particular resolution 2371 from August 5, is aimed squarely at inflicting economic misery. Among other things, the August sanctions prohibit north Korea from exporting coal, iron, iron ore, lead, lead ore, and seafood, all key commodities in the nation’s international trade. The resolution also banned countries from opening new or expanding existing joint ventures with the DPRK. [1]

September’s resolution further constrains North Korea’s ability to engage in regular international trade by barring the export of textiles. It is estimated that together, the sanctions eliminate 90 percent of the DPRK’s export earnings. [2] Foreign exchange

is essential for the smooth operation of any modern economy, and U.S. officials hope that by blocking North Korea’s ability to earn sufficient foreign exchange, the resolutions will deal a crippling blow to the economy. For North Korea’s estimated 100,000 to 200,000 textile workers the impact will be immediate, plunging most of them into unemployment. “If the goal of the sanctions is to create difficulties for ordinary workers and their ability to make a livelihood, then a ban on textiles will work,” specialist Paul Tija wryly notes. [3]

With around eighty percent of its land comprising mountainous terrain, North Korea has a limited amount of arable land, and the nation typically fills its food gap through imports. Sharply reduced rainfall during the April-June planting season this year reduced the amount of water available for irrigation and hampered sowing activities. Satellite monitoring indicates that crop yields are likely to fall well below the norm. [4] To make up for the shortfall, the DPRK has significantly boosted imports. [5] How much longer it can continue to do so remains to be seen, in the face of dwindling



Demonstration at U.S. Embassy in Seoul, September 8, 2017. Banner reads: “Remove THAAD! End Hostile Policy Against DPRK! U.S. Troops Out! Sign Peace Treaty Now!”

reserves of foreign exchange. In effect, by blocking North Korea's ability to engage in international trade, the United States has succeeded in weaponizing food by denying North Korea the means of providing an adequate supply to its people.

The September resolution also adversely impacts the livelihoods of North Korea's overseas workers, who will not be allowed to renew their contracts once they expire. They can only look forward to being forced from their jobs and expelled from their homes. [6]

International partnership is discouraged, as the resolution bans "the opening, maintenance, and operation of all joint ventures or cooperative entities, new and existing," which in effect permanently kills off any prospect of the reopening of the Kaesong Industrial Complex. With only two exceptions, all current operations are ordered to shut down within four months. [7]

A cap is imposed on the amount of oil North Korea is allowed to import, amounting to about a thirty percent reduction from current levels, along with a total ban on the import of natural gas and condensates. [8] Many factories and manufacturing plants could be forced to close down when they can no longer operate machinery. For the average person, hardship lies ahead as winter approaches, when many homes and offices will no longer be able to be heated.

What has any of this to do with North Korea's nuclear program? Nothing. The sanctions are an expression of pure malevolence. Vengeance is hitting every citizen of North Korea to further the U.S. goal of geopolitical domination of the Asia-Pacific.

Like north Korea, India, Pakistan, and Israel are non-signatories to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and have nuclear and missile arsenals. India and Pakistan launched ICBMs earlier in the year. North Korea is singled out for punishment, while the others receive U.S. aid. There is no principle at stake here. For that matter, there is something unseemly in the United States, with over one thousand nuclear tests, denouncing North Korea for its six. The U.S., having launched four ICBMs this year, condemns the DPRK for launching half that many. Is it not absurd that the United States, with its long record in recent years of bombing, invading, threatening, and overthrowing other nations, accuses north Korea, which has been at peace for several decades, of being an international threat?

North Korea observed the fate of Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Libya, and concluded that only a nuclear deterrent could stop the United States from attacking. It is the "threat" of North Korea being able to defend itself that has aroused U.S. ire on a spectacular scale.

Gangsterism as Foreign Policy

The U.S. war on the North Korean people does not stop with UN sanctions. In a recent hearing, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Ed Royce called for Chinese banks that do ordinary business with North Korea to be targeted: "We can designate Chinese banks and companies unilaterally, giving them a choice between doing business with North Korea or the United States... It's not just China. We should go after banks and companies in other countries that do business with North Korea in the same way... We



should press countries to end all trade with North Korea." [9]

At the same hearing, the Treasury Assistant Secretary Marshall Billingslea mentioned that his department had worked with the Justice Department to blacklist Russia's Independent Petroleum Company in June, along with associated individuals and companies, for having shipped oil to North Korea. Despite the fact that there was no UN resolution at that time which forbade such trade, the U.S. seized nearly \$7 million belonging to the company and its partners. [10]

Acting Assistant Secretary of State Susan Thornton was, if anything, more aggressive in her rhetoric than her colleagues, announcing that "we continue to call for all countries to cut trade ties with Pyongyang to increase North Korea's financial isolation and choke off revenue sources." She cautioned China and Russia that they must acquiesce to U.S. demands, warning them that if they "do not act, we will use the tools we have at our disposal. Just last month we rolled out new sanctions targeting Russian and Chinese individuals and entities supporting the DPRK." [11]

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin had threats to deliver, as well, warning China that if its actions against North Korea fail to live up to U.S. expectations, "we will put additional sanctions on them and prevent them from accessing the U.S. and international dollar system." [12] Since all international financial transactions process through the U.S. banking system, this threat is tantamount to shutting down Beijing's ability to conduct trade with any nation. It was a rather extravagant threat, and undoubtedly a difficult one to pull off, but one which the Trump administration is just reckless enough to consider undertaking.

There is nothing illegal or forbidden in a nation trading with North Korea in non-prohibited commodities. Yet, a total trade blockade is what Washington is after. U.S. officials are preparing sanctions against foreign banks and companies that do business with North Korea. "We intend to deny the regime its last remaining sources of revenue, unless and until it reverses course and denuclearizes," Billingslea darkly warns. "Those who collaborate with them

NO SANCTIONS, NO WAR AGAINST KOREA

are exposing themselves to enormous jeopardy.” [13] In essence, Washington is running an international protection racket: give us what we demand, or we will hurt you. This is gangsterism as foreign policy.

U.S. Blackmailing Many Countries to End Relations with DPRK

China opposed the UN sanctions that the Trump administration presented at the UN Security Council in September. However, according to U.S. and UN officials, the United States managed to extort China’s acquiescence by threatening to hit Chinese businesses with secondary sanctions. [14]

Before the August UN vote, similar threats were conveyed to Chinese diplomats at the U.S.-China Comprehensive Economic Dialogue, as U.S. officials indicated that ten businesses and individuals would be sanctioned if China did not vote in favor of sanctions. [15]

As a shot across the bow, the U.S. sanctioned the Chinese Bank of Dandong back in June, leading to Western firms severing contacts with the institution. [16]

Washington’s threats prompted China to implement steps in the financial realm that exceed what is called for by the UN Security Council resolutions. China’s largest banks have banned North Korean individuals and entities from opening new accounts, and some firms are not allowing deposits in existing accounts. [17] There is no UN prohibition on North Koreans opening accounts abroad, so the action is regarded as a proactive measure by Chinese banks to avoid becoming the target of U.S. sanctions. [18]

The demands never cease, no matter how much China gives way. U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson recently insisted that China impose a total oil embargo on north Korea. [19] China refused to go along, but it can expect to be subjected to mounting pressure from the U.S. in the weeks ahead.

U.S. officials are fanning out across the globe, seeking to cajole or threaten other nations to join the anti-DPRK crusade. Since most nations stand to lose far more by displeasing the U.S. than in ending a longstanding relationship with the DPRK, the campaign is having an effect.

In April, India banned all trade with North Korea, with the exception of food and medicine. This action failed to satisfy the Trump administration, which sent officials to New Delhi to ask for the curtailing of diplomatic contacts with the DPRK and help in monitoring North Korean economic activities in the region.[20] The Philippines, for its part, responded to U.S. demands by suspending all trade activity with North Korea. [21] Mexico and Peru are among the nations that are expelling North Korean diplomats, on



the arbitrary basis of responding to U.S. directives. [22] In addition to announcing that it would reduce North Korea’s diplomatic staff, Kuwait also said it would no longer issue visas to North Korean citizens. [23]

Many African nations have warm relations with the DPRK, dating back to the period of the continent’s liberation struggles. U.S. officials are focusing particular attention on Africa, and several nations are currently under investigation by the United Nations for their trade with North Korea. [24] The demand to cut relations with North Korea is not an easy sell for Washington, as Africans remember the U.S. for having backed apartheid regimes, while the DPRK had supported African liberation. “Our world outlook was determined by who was on our side during the most crucial time of our struggle, and North Korea was there for us,” says Tuliameni Kalomoh, an official in Namibia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [25] This is not the kind of language Washington likes to hear. U.S. economic power is sufficient to ruin any small nation, and with little choice in the matter, Namibia cancelled all contracts with North Korean firms. [26]

Egypt and Uganda are among the nations that have cut ties with the DPRK, and more nations are expected to follow suit, as the United States turns up the heat. Outside of the United Nations, the Trump administration is systematically erecting a total trade blockade against North Korea. Through this means, the U.S. hopes that North Korea will capitulate. That aim is premised on a serious misjudgment of the North Korean character.

The Trump administration claims that UN sanctions and its policy of maximum pressure are intended to bring North Korea to the negotiating table. But it is not the DPRK that needs to be persuaded to talk. President Trump has tweeted, “Talking is not the answer!” U.S. State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert laid down a stringent condition for negotiations: “For us to engage in talks with the DPRK, they would have to denuclearize.” [27] The demand for North Korea to give the United States everything it wants upfront, without receiving anything in return, as a precondition for talks is such an obvious nonstarter that it has to be regarded as a recipe for avoiding diplomacy.

DPRK Again Proposes Diplomacy, Based on Freeze for Freeze

North Korea contacted the Obama administration on several occasions and requested talks, only to be rebuffed each time and told it needed to denuclearize. This sad disconnect continues under Trump. In May, the DPRK informed the United States that it would stop nuclear testing and missile launches if the U.S. would drop its hostile policy and sanctions, as well as sign a peace treaty ending the Korean War. [28] The U.S. may not have cared for the conditions, but it could have suggested adjustments, had it been so inclined. Certainly, it was an opening that could have led to dialogue.

It is not diplomacy that the Trump administration seeks, but to crush North Korea. If the ostensible reason for UN sanctions is to persuade a reluctant party to negotiate, then one can only conclude that the wrong nation is being sanctioned. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying was scathing in her criticism of American and British leaders: “They are the loudest when it comes to sanctions, but nowhere to be found when it comes to making efforts to promote peace talks. They want nothing to do with responsibility.” [29] The months ahead look bleak. Unless China and Russia can find a way to oppose U.S. designs without becoming targets themselves, the North Korean people will stand alone and bear the burden of Trump’s malice. It says something for their character that they refuse to be cowed.

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(Gregory Elich is on the Advisory Board of the Korea Policy Institute and a member of the Solidarity Committee for Democracy and Peace in Korea.)

DEMAND THE U.S. SIGN A PEACE TREATY WITH KOREA

Oppose the Ninth Unjust and Illegal UN Security Council Resolution Imposed on the DPRK!

On September 11, the 15-member United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 2375 against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) for testing a hydrogen bomb on September 3 that could be delivered by an intercontinental ballistic missile. The hysteria at the UNSC and in the monopoly media covers up that these measures are part of the DPRK's program to arm itself against ongoing U.S. military threats and war exercises openly aimed at regime change. This is the ninth such resolution since 2006 engineered by the U.S. imperialists in a desperate attempt to hide the fact that they themselves are the cause of all the political problems on the Korean peninsula including the nuclear crisis.

All peace and justice-loving people in the U.S and around the world must resolutely denounce this latest sanction against the DPRK with a clear conscience because it is based on disinformation about and against the DPRK and turns truth on its head. The sanctions resolution is itself an egregious violation of the UN Charter and the rights of the DPRK as a member state of the UN to protect itself when threatened, and to affirm its sovereignty and independence.

The resolution does not address the simple fact that the DPRK has repeatedly called — twice this year alone — on the UN Security Council, which is mandated to uphold peace in the world, to intervene to stop the massive, annual and ongoing U.S.-south Korea war exercises, Key-Resolve/Foal Eagle in April and Ulchi-Freedom Guardian in August, to no avail.

The resolution notes piously that the UNSC is reiterating “its desire for a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the situation, and reiterating its welcoming of efforts by Council members as well as other Member States [of the UN] to facilitate a peaceful and comprehensive solution through dialogue.” The resolution conveniently hides that the main instigator of the resolution, the U.S., has rejected the DPRK's peaceful and diplomatic solution to the crisis on the Korean Peninsula by committing to end the build-up of its nuclear self-defense arsenal if the U.S. simultaneously stops the annual joint military exercises aimed against it, known as a freeze for a freeze.



Additionally, the DPRK has on numerous occasions called on the U.S. to sign a peace treaty to replace the Korean Armistice Agreement of 1953 and begin to normalize relations. Are these not diplomatic and peaceful solutions that the UNSC should endorse?

The resolution expresses “deep concern at the grave hardship that the people in the DPRK are subject to, condemns the DPRK for pursuing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles instead of the welfare of its people, while people in the DPRK have great unmet needs, and emphasizes the necessity of the DPRK respecting

and ensuring the welfare and inherent dignity of people in the DPRK.”

This outrageous accusation against the DPRK is beyond the pale. The plain truth is that from the beginning of the Korean War in 1950 to the present, the U.S. has imposed economic and political sanctions against the DPRK to punish it for defeating the U.S. forces in the Korean War and forcing the U.S. to sign the Armistice Agreement. It has also pressured Canada, Australia and other countries under its influence to follow suit — a blatant violation of the DPRK's sovereign right to establish fraternal bilateral relations with other member states of the UN for mutual benefit and causing the DPRK to suffer trillions of dollars in lost revenue and challenges in building a self-reliant economy. This longstanding economic and political embargo against the DPRK — the longest against one country in the world to date — in addition to the previous eight rounds of UNSC sanctions, constitute together the biggest and longest violations of the collective right to be of the people of the DPRK.

Resolution 2375 also hides the fact that the DPRK has repeatedly stated to the monopoly media, at the UN and to anyone who will listen that it would prefer to use its financial resources to raise the standard of living of its own people, but in the face of U.S. military threats and nuclear blackmail, it has been forced to build its self-defense nuclear arsenal to ensure its own survival, independence and sovereignty, as well as to maintain an equilibrium on the Korean Peninsula.

Despite all this, the DPRK government works very hard to ensure that the rights to housing, health care, a livelihood, education, security in old age and other rights are guaranteed to its citizens. This is more than can be said of other countries that currently comprise the UNSC, beginning with the U.S. where “grave hardships that the people are subjected to” are widespread. This includes growing inequality and widespread discrimination, economic uncertainty, violations of people’s basic rights to food and shelter, widespread unemployment and underemployment that violate “the inherent dignity of people.”

The latest sanctions against the DPRK will not solve the political problems on the Korean Peninsula but will only create more tensions and force the DPRK to take counter-measures in order to affirm its right to be. It is unconscionable that the UNSC, which

has been turned into a weapon of big power politics and imperialist war, is doing this to a small independent country that is exercising every inch of its capacity to seek a political solution to the crisis on the Korean Peninsula and is pushed further into a corner by the big powers. It does not bode well for peace on the Korean Peninsula.

It is the duty of all peace and justice-loving people in the U.S. and around the world to stand with the Korean people and the DPRK in thwarting all efforts by the U.S. imperialists and their allies to justify these illegal sanctions and war preparations. Stand together to demand that the U.S. immediately sign a peace treaty with the DPRK, remove all economic and political sanctions against that, end all military war games and accept the freeze for a freeze. The UNSC should repeal all nine illegal, unjust and immoral sets of sanctions against the DPRK!

Correcting History: Five Things No One Wants to Say About Korea

Ted Snider, September 14, 2017

On September 4, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley told the members of the Security Council: “Enough is enough. We have taken an incremental approach, and despite the best of intentions, it has not worked. Members of this Council will no doubt urge negotiations and a return to talks, but as I have just outlined, we have engaged in numerous direct and multilateral talks with the North Korean regime, and time after time they have not worked. The time for half measures in the Security Council is over. The time has come to exhaust all of our diplomatic means before it’s too late. We must now adopt the strongest possible measures.”

Ambassador Hailey’s conclusion that “We must now adopt the strongest possible measures” is based on an “outline” that is historically counterfactual. Correcting the history corrects the conclusion and could correct the course that is quickly leading to more sanctions and war, including a US request for any UN member state to be able to use “all necessary measures” to inspect North Korean ships: a resolution that “could trigger an exchange of fire.” And that means saying at least five things about Korea that no one seems to want to say.

1. We Started It

The official American transcript of the Korean War states clearly that on June 25, 1950, the North Korean army swarmed across the 38th parallel in a surprise invasion of South Korea. This account was read into the record on June 26 in the Security Council. This official account is repeated everywhere in the West and remains uncontested. North Korea was never permitted to provide its account to the UN.

But this unambiguous version of the beginning of the Korean War does not reflect the war’s more ambiguous beginning. The two Koreas had been battling across the dividing line for years. And as *The New York Times* admitted on June 26, 1950, “The warlike talk strangely has almost all come from South Korean leaders.” According to William Blum, South Korean leader

Syngman Rhee “had often expressed his desire and readiness to compel the unification of Korea by force.” William Polk similarly says that “Rhee had publicly spoken on the ‘need’ to invade the North to reunify the peninsula.”

Polk says the precipitous event for the outbreak of full war was Rhee’s unilateral declaration of the independence of the South. This declaration was “clearly understood” by North Korean leader Kim Il-sung as pulling the plug on reunification and was taken as an act of war. And even then, it is not clear that the North struck first in an “unprovoked aggression.”

The official Western version has North Korea invading South Korea on June 25. But the events of that evening get in the way. On the morning of June 26, South Korean leaders announced that their forces had captured the North Korean town of Haeju. What they do not say is that the invasion and capture of Haeju occurred on the 25th in a surprise invasion by the South across the 38th parallel. That invasion precedes the Northern assault and was itself preceded by two days of bombing by the South — on June 23 and 24 — that prepared the way for the Southern assault. In *Killing Hope*, Blum reports that an American military status report confirms the Southern incursion on June 25 and adds that Western press reports at the time confirmed the South Korean attack on Haeju.

The truth is cloudier than the unchallenged version. But the protected Western version allows North Korea to be seen as having always been an aggressor.

2. Tense Correction: Fire and Fury Like the World Has Seen

In August, Donald Trump threatened North Korea with “fire and fury like the world has never seen.” But the world has seen it. North Korea has seen it. Because in the Korean War, the United States devastated North Korea.

The West presents North Korea as a paranoid state whose fear and distrust of the US emerged *ex nihilo*. But North Korea’s

seemingly irrational need for deterrence has a history.

U.S. bombing of North Korea was not confined to military targets during the Korean War. The US carpet bombed North Korea, dropping around 635,000 tons of explosives and chemicals, including napalm. Cities were obliterated; Pyongyang was destroyed. Every installation, factory, city and village over thousands of square miles of North Korea was bombed into oblivion. B-29s bombed hydroelectric and irrigation dams, flooding farms and drowning crops. The US even gave serious consideration to dropping atomic bombs on North Korea. General Curtis LeMay, the head of the Strategic Air Command during the Korean War, said US bombs killed 20 percent of the entire population of North Korea. With 8-9 million Koreans killed, Polk says that “practically no families alive in Korea today are without a close relative who perished” in the US atrocity.

3. They Did It First: South Korea Was the First to Violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

North Korea joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985. South Korea had already signed on a decade earlier in 1975. But South Korea had already violated it before the North even joined in. From 1982 until 2000, South Korea was secretly violating the NPT — a not irrelevant historical detail that almost never makes it past the gatekeepers of the conversation.

According to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, in 2004 South Korea admitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that South Korean scientists had secretly been enriching uranium. In the early 1970s, fearing the effect of US reductions of forces in South Korea, the Weapons Exploitation Committee of the South Korean government made the decision to begin developing nuclear weapons. The South Korean weapons program seems to have continued until October 1979. The South Korean confession included secret activities that began in 1979 and continued through 1987, and the lack of declaration to the IAEA violated the country’s Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments. The IAEA says the non-declared activity was conducted over a 20-year period. While it is not known for certain that the scientists were working with higher-level approval, the scientists were working in the government-funded Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute.

4. Diplomacy Does Work

Contrary to the claims made by Nikki Haley at the UN and by Donald Trump everywhere, that “time after time” diplomacy has not worked with North Korea, time after time, diplomacy with North Korea has proven very effective.

According to the Arms Control Association, the United States has engaged in two major diplomatic efforts with North Korea over their nuclear program. The first was the Agreed Framework of 1994. This agreement led to North Korea freezing, and agreeing to eventually eliminate its nuclear weapons program. They



also agreed to allow special inspections by the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) to verify their compliance with the agreement. In return, North Korea was to receive two light-water reactors and supplies of heavy fuel oil.

The second was the 2005 agreement, in which North Korea committed to abandon “all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs” and to permit inspections.

Both worked, showing that diplomacy with North Korea was a possible route to nuclear disarmament. And when each stopped working, each time, the party chiefly responsible for the failure was not the North Koreans but the Americans.

The 1994 agreement included assurances that the U.S. would stop threatening North Korea. George W. Bush broke that agreement when he threatened North Korea and grouped it with Iran and Iraq in the “Axis of Evil.” Worse, the U.S. explicitly included North Korea in the 2002 nuclear posture review as a country the U.S. should be prepared to use a nuclear bomb on. It was only then that North Korea restarted its weapons program. The U.S. also failed in the fuel supply part of the agreement, providing only 15 percent of the fuel it had promised. By the late 1990s, according to Lawrence Wilkerson, who was special assistant to

Colin Powell, the United States was already not living up to its side of the Agreed Framework.

In October, 2002, nine months after the “Axis of Evil” speech, based on preliminary intelligence, the U.S. claimed that North Korea had restarted a clandestine nuclear program. Though, if true, the program would be a violation of the NPT, it would not actually be a violation of the Agreed Framework. Despite American claims that North Korea admitted to the program, North Korea has consistently denied that it ever made such an admission. Rather than following up the preliminary intelligence with North Korea or pursuing a solution through continuing diplomacy, the Bush administration, which lacked commitment to the Agreed Framework, used the preliminary intelligence as an excuse to kill the agreement. In a stunning admission, then Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs John Bolton called the preliminary intelligence “the hammer I had been looking for to shatter the Agreed Framework.”

Similar to the 1994 agreement, the 2005 agreement committed the U.S. to stop threatening to attack North Korea, to move towards normalization of relations and to commence planning of a light-water reactor that could produce fuel but not weapons. The blame for diplomacy’s failure once again was not with North Korea, but with the U.S. President Bush broke his light-water reactor promise and undertook economic warfare on North Korea.

Donald Trump says that diplomacy with North Korea has been “weak and ineffective.” But history says he is wrong.

5. North Korea Is Willing to Give Up Its Nuclear Deterrent if There Is No Longer a Need for a Deterrent

The claim is constantly made that the North Koreans are unwilling to negotiate away their nuclear weapons program. What is never said, though, is that that is not what they said. North Korea’s Deputy Ambassador Kim In-ryong recently put it this way to UN Secretary-General António Guterres: “As long as the U.S. hostile policy and nuclear threat continue, the DPRK, no matter who may say what, will never place its self-defensive nuclear deterrence on the negotiating table.” The conditional changes everything. North Korea is not saying it will never negotiate over its nuclear program; it is saying it will not negotiate away a deterrent until there are guarantees that they no longer need the deterrent. That is different, and that is never said.

And is not like the North Koreans are fabricating the threat. It was the U.S. that broke the armistice agreement that permitted no new weapons — including nuclear and other advanced weapons — to be brought onto the Korean Peninsula. In January 1958 the U.S. placed nuclear-tipped missiles in South

Korea. It was not until September 1991 that the U.S. removed approximately 100 nuclear weapons from South Korea. So, it was the U.S. and South Korea — not North Korea — that broke the weapons clause of the armistice agreement and introduced nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. That nuclear threat stared at North Korea for 33 years.

Traumatized by the napalm and carpet bombing of the Korean War, the North Koreans have felt a relentless existential threat. From U.S. nuclear missiles in South Korea, to the clandestine South Korean nuclear weapons program, to the “Axis of Evil,” to being named a country the U.S. should be prepared to drop a nuclear bomb on, the perception of an existential threat has been almost continuous. The perception of threat has continued with U.S.-South Korean military exercises on the North Korean border that include stealth bombers simulating nuclear bombing attacks on North Korea. Trump has threatened “fire and fury,” and lest you think that just rhetoric, has told Senator Lindsey Graham that, “There is a military option to destroy North Korea’s program and North Korea itself.” Defense Secretary Mattis warned North Korea that its actions “would lead to the end of its regime and the destruction of its people.”

Hence, the conditional in Ambassador Kim’s negotiations formulation. And his statement is far from the only appearance of that formulation. It was repeated by the Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho a month later. And on August 22, at a UN Conference on Disarmament, a North Korean diplomat said the same thing: “As long as the U.S. hostile policy and nuclear threat remains unchallenged, the DPRK will never place its self-defensive nuclear deterrence on the negotiating table.” Note again the “as long as,” as opposed to “never.” Kim Jong-un himself said the same thing on July 4.

North Korea has also shown the initiative to take the lead on the conditional formulation of the offer. In 2014, the Obama administration rejected a North Korean offer to freeze missile testing if the U.S. freezes the threatening joint military exercises it holds with South Korea. The same offer was made, and the same offer rejected in January 2015 [The same , freeze for a freeze offer has been made again more recently, also rejected by the U.S. North Korea has also called for a nuclear-free zone on the peninsula and in the region, which the U.S. has also repeatedly rejected. VOR Ed. Note].



I • Fully Fund Hurricane Relief

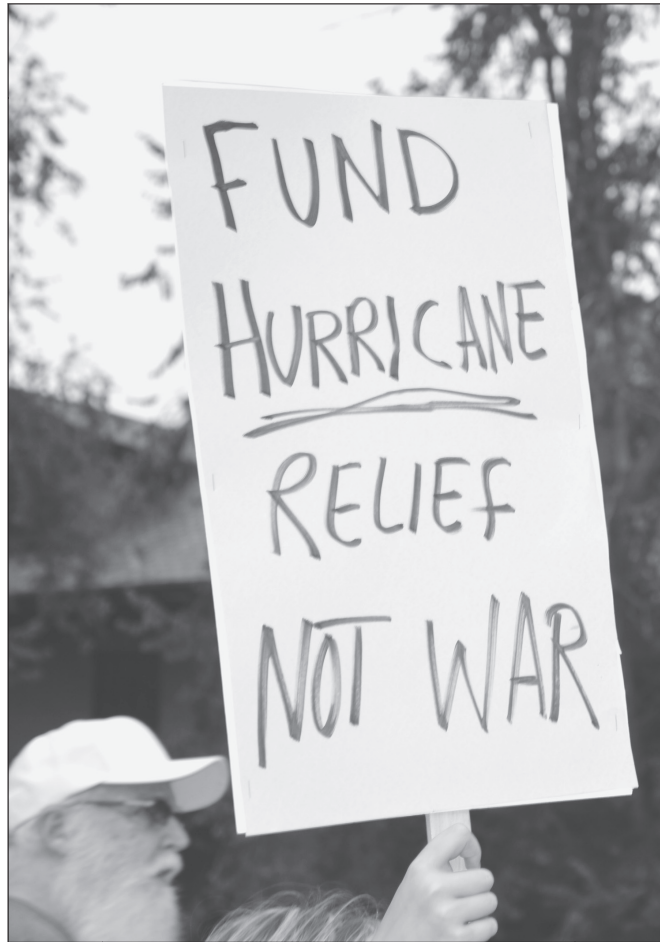
to family in Puerto Rico where lack of power means communication is down, set-up fund raising campaigns, and organizing together for the recovery.

Following on the heels of Irma, which caused \$1 billion in damages to homes and buildings, Hurricane María, with 155 mile-per hour winds — alongside government failure to provide the infrastructure and safety required before, during and after such storms, — has created a major humanitarian crisis in Puerto Rico. Much of the island remains without communications. Entire towns are isolated. Tens of thousands were forced to flee massive flooding, as the Guajataca Dam failed. It was known that this was going to occur, yet little was done in advance to prevent it. The 90-year-old dam, much like the levees in New Orleans with Katrina in 2005, was not strengthened and upgraded as required.

The National Weather Service warned the failure of the dam might be “imminent” and could lead to “life-threatening” flash floods for the estimated 70,000 people living in the immediate area. “This is an *extremely dangerous situation*,” the NWS wrote. “All the areas around the Guajataca River must evacuate *now*. Your lives are in *danger*.” The next day rushing water was sweeping through the municipalities of Isabela and Quebradillas after the dam failed.

The dam failure could have been prevented and is thus a government-made disaster. Similarly, while the government routinely calls for evacuations, as it did in Houston and Miami, it has no plan to guarantee such evacuations. Families are left to fend for themselves. And if they cannot afford to leave or have no means to do so, they cannot evacuate.

Puerto Rico, crippled by U.S. colonialism, and specifically the Control Board imposed, which has massively cut funding for social programs and infrastructure, was especially vulnerable. It is also now without funds for rebuilding and still under the dictate of the Control Board, which requires that debt payments come first. Current conditions overall are also government made, in that funding for infrastructure was not sufficient. While Trump finally declared Puerto Rico a disaster area, which releases federal funding, providing the immediate resources now is also not occurring at the level required. In fact the Federal Emergency



Management Agency (FEMA) is standing in the way of aid and creating a situation where supplies that have arrived are not being delivered.

The same can be said of reconstruction efforts in Houston and south Florida. So while an additional \$80 billion is being provided to the Pentagon, making a yearly budget of about \$700 billion, funding for relief and reconstruction is far below that. This too is a government-made disaster. Full and immediate funding is required.

In addition, the U.S. is blocking efforts by Cuba and Venezuela to provide assistance. President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela promised to activate a “special plan of support and solidarity” for Puerto Rican. Cuban Foreign Minister Rogelio Sierra offered to send a team of 39 doctors “to help our brother people.” The U.S. is refusing to allow the doctors to come to Puerto Rico, again showing its colonial status, as the people of

Puerto Rico welcome the support.

Disaster Relief as Military Exercise

There is also great concern about the military’s role in emergency operations in Texas, Florida and now Puerto Rico. For many, the military presence is more like an occupation than assistance. Soldiers armed with automatic weapons man checkpoints, something which civilians could easily do.

Every branch of the armed services — the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard — deployed significant contingents to the Houston area, in some cases sending along the sort of specialized equipment normally used in major combat operations. The combined response represented an extraordinary commitment of military assets to that massively flooded region: tens of thousands of National Guard and active-duty troops, thousands of Humvees and other military vehicles, hundreds of helicopters, dozens of cargo planes, and an assortment of naval vessels. And just as operations in Texas began to wind down, the Pentagon commenced a similarly vast mobilization for Hurricane Irma and then Maria.

Despite this massive military mobilization, ensuring power and clean water for the people impacted by the hurricanes was commonly not the main aim. The military is capable of quickly

CANCEL PUERTO RICO'S DEBT NOW

establishing power, water and food to run a small city. It could readily do so in the many towns left isolated in Puerto Rico. It has not done so. Rather, checkpoints were established and impacted areas patrolled by armed guardsmen. When federal relief comes in the form of armed National Guard troops patrolling the storefronts of flooded streets, weapons trained on local residents in the name of “the maintenance of civil order,” it is clear that an exercise in military occupation is taking place. People are being treated as a threat, rather than as human beings with rights to water and shelter.

The military’s response to Harvey began with front-line troops: the National Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard, and units of the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), the joint-service force responsible for homeland defense. Texas Governor Greg Abbott mobilized the entire Texas National Guard, about 10,000 strong, and guard contingents were deployed from other states as well. The Texas Guard came equipped with its own complement of helicopters, Humvees, and other all-terrain vehicles; the Coast Guard supplied 46 helicopters and dozens of shallow-water vessels, while NORTHCOM provided 87 helicopters, four C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft, and 100 high-water vehicles.

Still more aircraft were provided by the Air Force, including seven C-17 cargo planes and, in a highly unusual move, an E-3A Sentry airborne warning and control system, or AWACS. This super-sophisticated aircraft was originally designed to oversee air combat operations in Europe in the event of an all-out war with the Soviet Union. Instead, this particular AWACS conducted air traffic control and surveillance around Houston, gathering data on flooded areas, and providing “situational awareness” to military units involved “restoring order.”

For its part, the Navy deployed two major surface vessels, the USS Kearsarge, an amphibious assault ship, and the USS Oak Hill, a dock landing ship. “These ships,” the Navy reported, “are capable of providing medical support, maritime civil affairs, maritime security, expeditionary logistic support, [and] medium and heavy lift air support.” Accompanying them were several hundred Marines from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit based at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, along with their amphibious assault vehicles and a dozen or so helicopters and MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft.

When Irma struck, the Pentagon ordered a similar mobilization of troops and equipment. The Kearsarge and the Oak Hill, with their embarked Marines and helicopters, were redirected



from Houston to waters off Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. At the same time, the Navy dispatched a much larger flotilla, including the USS Abraham Lincoln (the aircraft carrier on which President George W. Bush had his infamous “mission accomplished” moment), the missile destroyer USS Farragut, the amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima, and the amphibious transport dock USS New York. Instead of its usual complement of fighter jets, the Abraham Lincoln set sail from its base in Norfolk, Virginia, with heavy-lift helicopters; the Iwo Jima and New York also carried a range of helicopters for relief and control operations.

The military presence for “civil control” and protection of property has brought to mind the military occupation of New Orleans following Katrina. Concentration camps were put in place for residents, families were separated and forced to evacuate, armed troops were used to protect private property while families were left stranded on their roofs. Brigadier General Gary Jones, the commander of the Louisiana National Guard’s Joint Task Force notably stated, “This place is going to look like Little Somalia. We’re going to go out and take this city back. This will be a combat operation to get this city under control.” With orders from their commanding officers to confront looters and shoot to kill, soldiers and local police alike targeted the residents of New Orleans, especially the mainly African American areas. Many in Puerto Rico, already a U.S. colony, are concerned that the increased military presence will remain.

The long-term recovery needed in Puerto Rico and all the areas hit by the hurricanes likely mean a continued military presence. Instead what is needed is full funding now for the needs of the people and providing them with the resources and power to decide how best to utilize the funds. It is defending the rights of the people that is required, not the property of the few. Further, for Puerto Rico, an immediate assistance would be to *Cancel the Debt!* And make the Wall Street financiers that imposed it and benefit from it pay for recovery.

CONTENDING WITH HURRICANE MARIA

Puerto Rico Continues Its Struggle For Independence

Nuria Barbosa León, September 28, 2017, Granma

Even in the midst of the difficult conditions in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria, Edwin González, representative of the Puerto Rican Mission to Havana, stressed that his country's struggle for decolonization continues to be a priority for all those committed to social emancipation.

On the occasion of the commemorations of the Grito de Lares (the Lares uprising of September 23, 1868), which continues to inspire current generations to fight for national sovereignty, the Puerto Rican activist noted that the struggle for independence endures. The country continues to be governed by the United States, currently exerting huge pressure on the island to pay off its massive debt, much of which is owed to U.S. investors.

González explained that Puerto Ricans are currently facing a very difficult situation, after being hit by two hurricanes, Irma and Maria, with the destruction yet to be fully quantified. This is aggravated by the complex economic crisis, including the impossibility of accessing funds to repair damages, and the population's lack of material resources.

He noted that the Financial Oversight and Management Board, appointed by the U.S. government to impose austerity measures, with wide-ranging power over local authorities, has approved just 2 billion dollars to respond to the emergency, despite the widespread destruction.

González added, "The positive aspect of the moment is seeing our people united, helping each other to conduct self-evacuation during the hurricane and now cleaning up their areas and streets to try to restore normality in the shortest possible time. This attitude strengthens us as a nation, and we advance in our struggle to achieve the decolonization of Puerto Rico."

He thanked Cuba for the offer of aid to help hurricane victims. [Which the U.S. blocked, VOR Ed. Note.] "Unity among the Puerto Rican people and that vision of the country, far removed from the North American territory, will help us triumph against colonialism, beyond the decisions of the Financial Oversight Board, the annexationist government, and economic problems faced at this moment," he stressed.

Since 1975, a day of support for the decolonization of Puerto Rico has been held every year in the Cuban capital, coordinated by the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). The



event recalls the Declaration of Independence pronounced with the Grito de Lares and pays tribute to the founding father of the Puerto Rican homeland, Ramón Emeterio Betances, and independence patriot Filiberto Ojeda, assassinated on September 23, 2005, by agents of the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

During this year's commemorations, ICAP President Fernando González Lloret expressed his confidence that one day Puerto Rico will be free, and activities to mark this important date will be of a different character: "Perhaps at that time we will celebrate the national holiday, but keep in mind the commitment of Cubans to accompany the Puerto Rican people always."

The decorated Hero of the Republic of Cuba recalled Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, an educator of the new generations on the subject of solidarity with this sister nation, and stated that Cubans today have the responsibility to support the independence struggles of the peoples of the world.

He also referred to Filiberto Ojeda, asserting that "One day there will be schools and streets with his name and the people of Puerto Rico will have him in their hearts as one of the unyielding fighters for the country's independence. He was able, at over 70 years of age, to leave us an example of resistance, of struggle, of being willing to make the greatest sacrifices for the dream of a free and independent Puerto Rico."

The event concluded with a performance by Puerto Rican trova singer-songwriter, Roy Brown, who emphasized the feeling of his people in his chorus: "Thus I shout at the villain: I would be Puerto Rican even if I were born on the moon"

AN UNNATURAL DISASTER

Memento Mori: a Requiem for Puerto Rico

Miguel A. Cruz-Díaz, Indiana University

Puerto Rico is dying. Let those words sink in. Three and a half million people are without power, water, fuel, food, and support. This is not some uninhabited atoll. This is where I grew up. This is where my family lives. This is my home. And my home is dying.

I have been desperately trying to come up with the right words to express what I feel and what I think for the better part of a day. My social media has as of late provided me with a space to write my remarks, observations, and more often than not, rants about the situation on Puerto Rico. I shared my anxieties when hours, then days passed without a word from my family. I cried in silent sobs at the pictures that slowly started to come out of the island. Despair began to unite the large Puerto Rican diaspora as we comforted each other, and waited as the absolute silence became more and more unbearable.

"Have you heard from..."

"Does anyone have any information about my hometown..."

"My mom, she's not well, I can't reach her..."

"I can't find my partner..."

It was only last Friday when I had proof of life from my family in my hometown of Arecibo. And it was on Sunday that I was finally able to speak to them over the phone. Speak... more like share moments of absolute joy and tears of happiness. Of feeling born again. And with that memory fresh in my mind, I sat down to write.

Nothing came except tears. I am crying as I write this.

How can one put into words how it feels to be completely powerless as the world I have always known slowly turns into Hell for those that I love the most? How can one fully express in words that could convey, in any way, the overwhelming sense of constant pain, of horrible uncertainty, the fear of loss, and the fury over what is, in the end, an unnatural disaster? And how can I live with myself for not being there?

How can I explain to people that Puerto Rico, my home, my island, my heart and soul, is dying?

The fear of death is an eternal companion in these situations. So as my country slowly agonizes, would it be appropriate for me to write a eulogy for its seemingly inevitable death? Perhaps some choice words as a send-off to the oldest colony in the world? As Donald Trump, the biggest psychopath to occupy



No to the Debt! Yes to Reconstruction!

the Oval Office so far, finally relents to growing public pressure and announces that federal funds will be made available in full to Puerto Rico, and as more aid slowly makes its way to the island, could I dare hope for a stay of its execution? Or is this just another delay in its pre-ordained death-by-empire?

President Trump's message to Puerto Rico was clear: pay up and drop dead. The island is expected to pay its imaginary debt for the dubious "privilege" of being an imperial colony in the way it has always done so: in blood. Wall Street's interests have priority over securing the very survival of nearly four million people. God forbid that millionaire Wall Street bondholders suffer the horror of payment forfeiture over a minor inconvenience like Hurricane María, only the worst storm in eighty years!

The president initially denied full federal assistance to the island and refused to suspend the *Merchant Marine Act of 1920*, or Jones Act, that has for nearly a century strangled commerce to and from Puerto Rico. [The act requires all ships to first dock at a U.S. port before going to Puerto Rico, which in this case means greatly dealing aid from other countries. — VOR Ed. Note]. Because of this stubbornness an obviously colonial World War One-vintage piece of legal protectionism continues

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to choke the island as its inhabitants are left to fend for themselves. Colonialism is a self-perpetuating state of exception that thrives on crises precisely because the beneficiaries are always the colonizers and their local flunkies who maintain and benefit from the illusion of “self-governance.”

While Homeland Security steadfastly holds on to its refusal to wave the *Jones Act*, Herr Trump was later forced by public pressure to amend his remarks on aid, and the USNS Comfort hospital ship is now scheduled to arrive on the island in three to five days (as will our bloviating commander-in-chief himself at some point). Any help received from the U.S. imperial mainland now carries with it a stigma, a sense of being a discarded, second-hand lifeline. This is extremely revealing. It has been over a week since Hurricane María cut a path of destruction in Puerto Rico nearly beyond the scope of living memory, a week that passed before Trump made any remarks at all. It was a week filled by hysterics over kneeling, Russia and north Korea, a week of forgetting that Puerto Rico even existed.

U.S. colonialism is not just confined to its territories or its Native American population. [...] The white supremacist regime that attacks NFL players and Black Lives Matter activists for having the nerve to protest is the same regime that established the fiscal control board, the biggest killer in Hurricane María’s wake. These things are directly related, and the fiscal control board’s austerity measures ensured that it has blood on its hands. [...]

The other killer phenomenon to approximate María’s devastation and raw power was Hurricane San Felipe II, in 1928. Yet María’s devastation attacked an island that, in many ways, was in worse shape than the relatively pre-industrial Puerto Rico of the 1920’s. Hurricane San Felipe was nature’s killer. Hurricane María, however, has only exposed colonialism’s murderous true self. There is nothing natural about this killer.

María found the perfect target: an island whose infrastructure was crippled by decades of colonial neglect... Long lines await supplies and fuel that are not being delivered. Two deaths were reported at an ICU when its generator failed, drained bone-dry as its diesel fuel never arrived. Governor Rosselló has been busy with a nonstop photo op tour since the hurricane passed. His Facebook page and Twitter account are filled with photos of his smiling face. But it is all smoke and mirrors. More and more mayors are voicing their rage at the lack of supplies. Whole shipments of supplies and fuel await distribution.

The situation has laid bare the reality that there was never a plan put into place. It has also revealed that FEMA has utterly failed in its role. San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz, acting in every way much more responsibly than our delusional governor, has denounced FEMA which has tied up any aid effort with red tape, asking for interminable memos and paralyzing aid distribution. [...]

This official paralysis and complete disregard for reality often



leaves first responders and National Guardsmen mobilized to help with distribution literally empty-handed. And this crass stupidity is not limited to help on the national level. Cuba has offered help in the form of doctors and a brigade of electrical workers to help shore up and rebuild the island’s ravaged infrastructure. Cuba! Yet cruelly, but predictably, the American government denied them entry.

FEMA’s (in)actions border on being criminally negligent, even going as far as kicking roughly 400 refugees out of the San Juan Convention Center in order to conveniently take it over as their center of operations alongside the Puerto Rican central government. Federal and local agencies have become shining examples of feckless inaction, and fetid bureaucracy. In typical Trumpist fashion, FEMA’s response has been to accuse the media of biased reporting, but

the true bias is self-evident.

Puerto Rico is dying, yes. It is a victim of the racist vindictiveness of its colonial masters. Colonialism will always be a humanitarian crisis.

But Puerto Rico is not dead yet.

In fact, something seems to be happening. The lack of governmental aid, the realization that U.S. aid is essentially a fantasy, the uncalled-for curfew that is tailor made to pacify anxious shareholders stateside and not help the citizenry, and the need to rediscover communal bonds of mutual aid have done something to Puerto Ricans. I confess to standing in awe of the newly found resilience, the furious indignation turned into action, and the unbreakable bonds of basic humanity that have returned with a vengeance. And with it comes a growing sense of indignation, of anger towards our colonial masters. Anger, blessed anger, the engine of political and social change par excellence.

Puerto Rico is dying, but if it survives this and rises once again, it may do so inoculated from the diseased colonial mentality that has crushed its collective spirit for so long. It is a long shot, but it is worth thinking about now more than ever. This national tragedy has made Boricuas remember that they can, in fact, do things on their own together. That the often-remarked bravery of Puerto Ricans that many feared lost by colonialism’s savage indoctrination (I confess to being amongst those that felt this way) was always there. That fury and indignation lead to freedom. Like many fellow Puerto Ricans that live in exile, we have come forward to join that life-and-death struggle for our homeland, and we do so together, always loyal.

As the imperialist invader revels in his pettiness and apathy it becomes clear that the Puerto Rican people must resist and fight back in the best way possible: by surviving and thriving together. Then maybe, just maybe, we will rid Puerto Rico of the U.S. flag’s stagnating shadow over our island and reduce it to a simple funerary shroud wrapped around the corpse of U.S. colonialism, breaking away from that dying empire once and for all.

GOVERNMENT MADE DISASTERS IN WAKE OF MARIA

Deaths in Puerto Rico are Underreported

Omayra Sosa Pascual, September 28, 2017, periodismoinvestigativo.com

Leovigildo Cotté died in the midst of desperation over not getting the oxygen needed to keep him alive in the only shelter that exists in the town of Lajas, which has been without electricity since the passing of Hurricane María a week ago. Not even his connections with the government saved him.

"The generator never arrived," sadly said the current Mayor of Lajas, Marcos Turín Irizarry, who said he looked for oxygen for Cotté, father of the former mayor of that same town, "turning every stone," but could not find it.

Cotté is one of the unaccounted victims of the Category 5 hurricane that devastated all of Puerto Rico last week, with its sustained winds and gusts of up to 200 miles per hour. On Wednesday, the Government of Puerto Rico, still held that the official number of deaths as a result of the catastrophe was 16, but the Center for Investigative Journalism (CPI, for its initials in Spanish) has confirmed that there are dozens and could be hundreds in the final count.

The fatalities related to circumstances created by the hurricane are still mounting with each passing day, and official numbers are not counting patients who are not receiving dialysis, oxygen and other essential services, such as Pedro Fontánez, 79, who is bedridden at the Pavia Hospital in Santurce and who the institution is attempting to release since Saturday, while he lacks electricity at home to support the oxygen and gastric tube-feeding he needs to continue living. His daughter Nilka Fontánez showed up desperate at the government's Emergency Operations Center asking for help, but was told they were not accepting patients there.

"There's no information," she said frustrated.

The dead are at the hospital morgues, which are at capacity and in remote places where the Government has yet to go, and in many cases, their families are unaware of the deaths. The Demographic Registry certifies the deaths so bodies can be removed by funeral homes, many of which are also not operating for a lack of resources and fuel. They barely began certifying some of the dead on Monday, as Health Secretary Rafael Rodríguez-Mercado confirmed in an interview.

Public Safety Secretary Héctor Pesquera told the CPI that the names of the dead due to the hurricane will not be revealed, as the lack of communication has kept many people from knowing the whereabouts of their families. Since the hurricane, many people have gone daily to radio stations so that the on-air personalities can say the names of family members with whom they have been unable to communicate in a desperate attempt to find them.

70 Percent of Hospitals Unable to Operate

A week after María's passage, the Government of Puerto Rico is trying with great difficulty to supply basic services, such as fuel, roads and communications and tells the world every day of the progress of these efforts through their press conferences at the Emergency Operations Center (COE, for its initials in Spanish) established in San Juan. But the fact that is not discussed is that the number of deaths resulting from the disaster are much higher than

the 16 or 19 that have been offered as the official tally.

CPI sources in half a dozen hospitals said those bodies are piling up at the morgues of the 69 hospitals in Puerto Rico, of which 70% are not operating. The majority of the hospital morgues that provided information including Doctor's Center in Bayamón and Santurce, Pavia Hospital in Santurce, the Manatí Medical Center, Dr. Pila in Ponce, the Río Piedras Medical Center, the Mayagüez Medical Center and the HIMA hospitals in Caguas and Bayamón, are at full capacity. Those hospitals are among the 18 that are partially operational.

Furthermore, this media outlet learned that the Institute of Forensic Sciences is also full of bodies and that allegedly 25 of those are hurricane victims. On Tuesday, the IFS informed that it had increased its storage capacity for bodies with a trailer that was obtained through The Morgue federal program.

It is unclear what is happening with the deceased that are at the morgues of the 51 hospitals that have had to close their doors, with which it has been impossible to communicate.

Secretary Rodríguez-Mercado acknowledged that hospital morgues are full, including the one at the Medical Center in Mayagüez. He said the accumulated bodies cannot be removed from the morgues by funeral homes until the deaths can be certified by the Demographic Registry, who barely began operating from regional emergency centers on October 2.

Furthermore, the doctor acknowledged that the hurricane-related deaths are many more than those officially documented so far. As he said, the three hospitals he visited that day in the island's western region, during the first contact he was able to achieve with that region, he documented seven additional deaths "to the 19" that had been revealed so far. That same afternoon, Governor Ricardo Rosselló said the official figure of hurricane-related deaths was still 16.

To date, Rodríguez did not know the status of the situation at the hospitals in Ponce, because the region remained completely cut off from communications, but planned to go to that town on October 3 to explore the matter. On October 4, the CPI learned through Ponce Mayor María "Mayita" Meléndez that the hospitals operating in that town are San Cristóbal and San Lucas.

"We're finding dead people, people who have been buried. Related to the hurricane (we have) 19 dead, which the governor reported, but (people) have made common graves. We've been told people have buried their family members because they're in places that have yet to be reached," the Secretary told the CPI, while visibly shaken.

The scenario is not optimistic. The hospitals that closed their doors during the week that the emergency has lasted have more than 4,000 beds, and when asked what happened to those patients, where they were transferred, the Secretary responded with a sincere "I don't know."

CPI sources said that in just two of the hospitals that are operating, they were able to document a dozen deaths among patients

that were transferred out of the closed-down hospitals. Furthermore, they pointed out that the problem is that patients are arriving in critical condition, with ventilators, for example, and with poorly documented records regarding what had happened at the institution where they were hospitalized. For that reason, and the limitation of resources and fuel for power generators, the majority of hospitals that are “operational” are not accepting transfers or new patients, they said. The Río Piedras Medical Center, the government’s main hospital for this disaster and the only tertiary hospital in Puerto Rico, has been operating at half capacity.

Rodríguez-Mercado said October 4 that on that same day, they would meet with specialized authorities from the U.S. Department of Health to discuss the protocols used to handle cadavers to prevent a budding public health problem. He said the current protocol for disposing bodies and vegetative material in emergency situations is managed by the Environmental Quality Board. But soon after, the president of that agency, Tania Vázquez, said in an interview that her agency only oversees the protocol related to disposing of animals, not human beings, but added that burying a dead person without a certification of the death is a crime. As of press time, Governor Ricardo Rosselló’s press secretary had not responded to a petition to clear up who is responsible for the protocol for these emergency burials.

Meanwhile, the dead continue to accumulate as a result of the chaos in the health system due to a lack of diesel and the absence of a communications plan between the system’s components, and these must be added to those who are in areas that still lack com-



munication and those in remote areas.

“We’re fighting. I would love for the government to understand that it has to open dialysis centers. If they don’t receive the service, the patients’ health is compromised quickly and they die. And yes, they have died,” Armando Rodríguez, vice president of Grupo HIMA confessed when confirming that the morgues of his two hospitals in Bayamón and Caguas are above capacity.

Meanwhile, thousands of doctors and nurses are literally at home unable to work, said Dr. Joaquín Vargas, president of the Puerto Rico Primary Physicians Groups Association, who was at the COE to see if the government would set up an operations center where they could at least answer calls from citizens.

The CPI also learned that a large portion of specialized physicians are unable to work because hospitals do not have supplies and the ability to conduct their procedures, nor basic resources such as fuel or electricity to run their medical practices.

FEMA Eliminates Data on Puerto Rico’s Lack of Power, Water

Andrea Germanos

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has removed statistics on the large percentage of residents who still have no clean drinking water or electricity from its web page providing updates on the federal response to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico.

The Washington Post reported October 5 on the suppressed information.

The page still exists, but no longer contains key data that 96 percent of the island’s residents still do not have electricity and half still have no clean drinking water—statistics that clearly do

not comport with President Donald Trump's positive spin on the administration's highly-criticized response to the devastation.

The data was still on the page as recently as Wednesday, October 4, but by Thursday had been wiped out.

The section entitled "Power Restoration and Fuel Impacts" no longer appears at all, and the "Water/Wastewater Impacts" section only reflects the percentage of waste water treatment plants running on generator power, leaving out the percentage

of residents with no access to drinking water.

FEMA spokesman William Booher told the *Post*, "Information on the stats you are specifically looking for are readily available" on www.status.pr, the Spanish-language website maintained by the office of Puerto Rican Governor Ricardo Rosselló. "In other words," writes Steve Benen at MSNBC, "there are statistics available to the public, just not the ones Team Trump dislikes." (*Common Dreams*)

Nuclear Plants Plus Hurricanes: Disasters Waiting to Happen

Harvey Wasserman, September 22, 2017

Throughout the world, some 430 reactors are in various stages of vulnerability to natural disaster, including ninety-nine in the United States. Although the mainstream media said next to nothing about it, independent experts have made it clear that Hurricanes Harvey and Irma threatened six U.S. nuclear plants with major destruction, and therefore all of us with disaster. It is a danger that remains for the inevitable hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis and other natural disasters yet to come.

During Harvey and Irma, six holdovers from a dying reactor industry —two on the Gulf Coast at South Texas, two at Key Largo and two more north of Miami at Port St. Lucie — were under severe threat of catastrophic failure. All of them rely on off-site power systems that were extremely vulnerable throughout the storms. At St. Lucie Unit One, an NRC official reported a salt buildup on electrical equipment requiring a power downgrade in the midst of the storm.

Loss of backup electricity was at the core of the 2011 catastrophe at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in Japan when the tsunami there and ensuing flood shorted out critical systems. The reactor cores could not be cooled. Three melted. Their cores have yet to be found. Water pouring over them flooded into the Pacific, carrying away unprecedented quantities of cesium and other radioactive isotopes. In 2015, scientists detected radioactive contamination from Fukushima along the coast near British Columbia and California.

Four of six Fukushima Daiichi reactors suffered hydrogen explosions, releasing radioactive fallout far in excess of what came down after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Extreme danger still surrounds Fukushima's highly radioactive fuel pools, which are in varied stages of ruin.

"In addition to reactors, which at least are within containment structures, high-level radioactive waste storage pools are not within containment, and are also mega-catastrophes waiting to happen, as in the event of a natural disaster like a hurricane," says Kevin Kamps of the activist group Beyond Nuclear.



In 1992 Hurricane Andrew paralyzed fire protection systems at Florida's Turkey Point and so severely damaged a 350-foot-high tower it had to be demolished. The eye of that storm went directly over the reactor, sweeping away support buildings valued at \$100 million or more.

There is no reason to rule out a future storm negating fire protection systems, flinging airborne debris into critical support buildings, killing off-site backup power, and more.

As during Andrew, the owners of the nuclear plants under assault from Harvey and Irma had an interest in dragging their feet on timely shut-downs. Because they are not liable for downwind damage done in a major disaster, the utilities can profit by keeping the reactors operating as long as they can, despite the obvious public danger.

Viable evacuation plans are a legal requirement for continued reactor operation. But such planning has been a major bone of contention, prompting prolonged court battles at Seabrook, New Hampshire, and playing a critical role in the shutdown of the Shoreham reactor on Long Island. After a 1986 earthquake damaged the Perry reactor in Ohio, then-Governor Richard Celeste sued to delay issuance of the plant's operating license. A state commission later concluded evacuation during a disaster there was not possible.

The complete blackout of any serious discussion of what Harvey and Irma threatened to do to these six Texas and Florida reactors is cause for deep concern.

ATHLETES REFUSING TO BE SILENT

Trump Comments Are a Demand for Loyalty

Recent comments by President Trump targeting athletes taking a knee and refusing to stand for the anthem have been widely reported. However, there has been little discussion on the significance of his remarks being a demand for loyalty, not only from athletes but from the public in general. This same demand was reflected in his speech at the UN to countries and peoples internationally. The essence of his remarks were for all to “respect our flag,” that is U.S. empire, or be punished. For the players he calls for them getting fired, for those internationally far greater violence is threatened, including “totally destroying,” the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). In general he has been expressing the demand of the U.S. state that it will decide who is and is not loyal, or a threat, and will act to use punishment and force with impunity.

In his comments to athletes, Trump specifically targeted African Americans, who make up 70 percent of the players in the National Football League (NFL). And while the comments were directed at athletes, it is also the case that African Americans are known as one of the most militant sections of the U.S. working class. In this manner Trump is using athletes, highly public figures, to test the waters more broadly of the readiness of the public to submit to the demand for loyalty to the flag and the U.S. state it represents. There is to be no opposition to the broad and persistent racism, brutality and violence of the state. There is to be loyalty to wholesale impunity at all levels, or punishment and use of force. The crisis of the U.S. state is such that even the appearance of



a government of laws has been abandoned as a government of police powers is consolidated. It is a government without regard for rule of law or legitimacy, but rather one of arbitrary actions and violence, at home and abroad.

Trump’s demand to be loyal was recognized by some of the athletes. Chris Conley, of the Kansas City Chiefs expressed it in this manner “‘Stick to sports boy... Sit down and do what you’re told. Say or do something we don’t like and your fired’ Well I hate to break it to ya...” This refusal to be silent also was reflected in numerous comments. Michael Thomas, of the New Orleans Saints said, “Continue to use your voices and your platforms for racial equality and to stop injustices in our communities. This is bigger than us!!!” And the broadening of the protest to include many other athletes and millions who expressed their support in various ways, is a further indication that the people do not accept impunity and inequality and more generally are rejecting the direction the country is headed in.

It can be anticipated that Trump, as representative of the U.S. state, will continue to demand loyalty and will also unleash increasing violence, at home and abroad. Existing conditions are demanding that people continue to stand up for justice and in doing so, organize for a new direction for political affairs. The old U.S.-style democracy, with its anthem and Constitution enshrining enslavement, has no place. Replicating the old will not solve the problem of inequality and a government no longer fit to govern. A new democracy of our own making, where the people are empowered to govern and decide is needed and organizing in that direction is critical.



Los Angeles Sparks and Washington Mystics lock arms during anthem, August 16, 2017

TARGETING U.S. STATE FOR POLICE KILLINGS AND IMPUNITY

Broad Protest by NFL Players, Kaepernick's Fraternity, WNBA Women and Many More

On the first Sunday of the NFL season, about 50 members of the Kappa Alpha Psi alumni chapter in Detroit marched about a mile to protest government impunity for police killings. The action ended just outside Ford Field, where the Lions hosted the Arizona Cardinals. The demonstrators expressed their firm support for alumni quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who last year, for four months straight, every game, refused to stand for the national anthem, opposing police brutality and killings of unarmed African Americans, and impunity for these crimes. Many other NFL players, including those from San Francisco, Seattle, Green Bay and others, joined in protest at the start of this season, taking a knee or sitting during the anthem.

Following his actions last year many college students, high school and little league teams, women's soccer players and others, joined in refusing to stand for the anthem. While those joining in protest have various reasons for doing so, what is common in the collective action is use of the anthem as their symbol, which focuses blame not individual police, but on the U.S. state.

Kaepernick remains unsigned, punishment by the owners for his refusal to back down. At the same time he has been recognized by his peers, voted the NFL Players Association most valuable player, in part for his work among young minority youth, providing Know Your Rights seminars. DeMaurice Smith, president of the Players Association said, "We will never back down. We no longer can afford to stick to sports."

The protest by NFL and other athletes spread even further following derogatory remarks by President Trump, referring to players who protest as a "son of a b----" and calling for them to be fired. On September 24, more than 200 players involving the majority of teams knelt or linked arms or raised fists during the anthem. The Pittsburgh Steelers, Seattle Seahawks and Cincinnati Bengals stayed in the locker room and refused to take the field during the anthem. The majority of the Oakland Raiders refused to stand for the anthem. Two-time Pro Bowler Travis Kelce, a tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs was among the white players who took a knee.

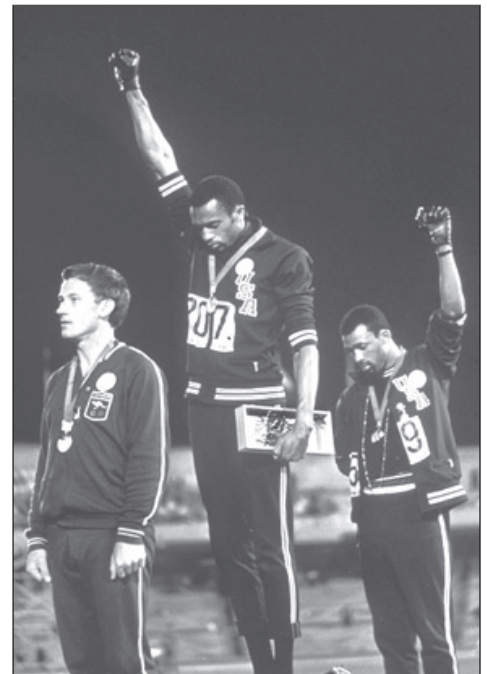
Athletes from various sports have also joined in opposing inequality and police killings. Oakland Athletics catcher Bruce Maxwell was the first major league baseball player to take a knee. Reigning Women's National Basketball Association champions, the Los Angeles Sparks, before the first game of this year's WNBA finals, refused to come out of the locker room for the anthem. Women volleyball players at Johnson Smith, a historically black university, knelt before their game. An entire little league team in Illinois took a knee September 20, in part to oppose the acquittal of a policeman in St Louis, joining days-long protests there against police impunity to kill young African Americans. Many other teams and students at various levels have also participated

by refusing to stand for the anthem.

The common feature of these various actions is using the national anthem, which is a symbol of the U.S. state, one that endures from one government to the next. It represents the state and its actions, at home and abroad, just as the flag does. Indeed, the U.S. anthem is one of the few national anthems worldwide that is about the flag. The protests objectively target the state and its character as a racist state with impunity to kill and to disregard the rule of law, at home and abroad. This is a just and significant stand by all the athletes and the millions who have joined in expressing support for them.

Long History of Protest Using Anthem

Kaepernick and the many that have joined him in protest against government racism and inequality join a long line of African American athletes who have taken public stands, such as Mohammed Ali and Olympic athletes Tommy Smith and John Carlos. Refusing to be intimidated by threats and loss of their careers, they stood for justice and refused to be silenced.



Tommy Smith and John Carlos raise their fists during anthem at 1968 Olympics

Refusing to stand for the anthem has a long history, often as an expression against war and for equality. Refusal to stand during the anthem was a widespread form of protest during World War I, in part to oppose conscription and also in support of the developing communist and workers movements of the day.

In the 1960s, refusal to stand during the anthem became widespread among students and athletes at universities, both to oppose the war against Viet Nam and in support of the struggles for equality and rights. The anthem was rightly seen to represent U.S. aggression abroad and oppression at home.

Athletes were often punished for their stand. In 1968 African-American gold and bronze medal Olympic athletes Tommie

Smith and John Carlos raised a black-gloved fist during the anthem and wore human rights badges on their jackets, thus standing up for rights at home and abroad. They were sent home as punishment.

In December 1968, Chris Wood, co-captain of the Adelbert College basketball team was removed from the team for not standing. Five white high school students were suspended in Cumberland, Maryland in February 1970 for refusing to stand.

During the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, Vincent Matthews of New York City and Wayne Collett of Santa Monica, California came in first and second in the 400 meter race. The pair refused to stand at attention on the victory stand and were barred from running in the 1,600 meter relay later in the games.

Numerous teams and students at various universities also refused to stand during the '60s and '70s, as anti-war and pro-rights protests. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, refused to stand at UCLA basketball games, and in response the anthem was played before the players left the locker room. The same was done when the five starters of Florida State University's basketball team, all African American, refused to stand in 1971. Numerous court cases emerged as students defended their right to speak and

stand against the actions of the U.S. state.

In 1996, Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf, guard for the NBA Denver Nuggets, refused to stand during the anthem before games in protest of government promotion of anti-Islamic views. He was suspended for his actions.

In 2003, two women's basketball players, Toni Smith of Manhattanville College and Deidra Chatman of the University of Virginia, refused to face the flag during the anthem. Chatman, a Jehovah's Witness, protested for one game in March 2003 to oppose U.S. war against Iraq. Smith, who had been boycotting the anthem all season long before being finally noticed in February 2003, said that she was also protesting war against Iraq, as well as a growing disparity between the rich and the poor.

These are a few of the many examples, which have in common the courage of those standing up against the U.S. state, its wars and racism, using the anthem as their symbol of rejection. And despite being punished, athletes and students refuse to be silent and refuse to accept loyalty to an anthem and flag that does not stand for justice. As many students have put it, "We will stand for the anthem and the pledge, when the flag stands for liberty and justice for all."

The NFL Should Do More Than Just Take a Knee

Jessica Pierre, OtherWords.org

When Colin Kaepernick began to protest during the national anthem at NFL games last year, he made his intent very clear. "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," Kaepernick told NFL Media.

"To me, this is bigger than football," he explained, "and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder."

Kaepernick made the brave decision to do this mostly alone — and of course faced the backlash and took the heat on his own. That was until President Trump decided to attack black sports players who raised awareness about racial injustice.

At a campaign rally in Alabama, Trump called out NFL players that chose to take a knee or sit during the anthem. "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, say, 'Get that son of a b--- off the field right now'?" Trump asked.

The following Sunday, a far greater number of NFL players stood up for those who protest inequity during the national anthem — and were joined, surprisingly, by many of the team owners Trump called out to.

While this was a good show of solidarity, it led some to wonder whether the NFL actually cares about black lives, or whether team owners were just looking to distance themselves from Trump's problematic and divisive comments.

African-American males are only 6 percent of the United States population, but comprise nearly 70 percent of NFL players. It's no wonder that issues around race are making their way into the NFL spotlight.

Black issues have never been a concern for NFL officials when it came to causes worthy of their monetary support. Instead, many NFL officials have donated millions to causes that were openly hostile to the Black Lives Matter movement — such as the Trump campaign.

CNN Money reports that "at least \$7.75 million of the \$106 million raised for Trump's inaugural committee came from NFL owners and the league." Several owners, many of whom supported Trump — and seven of whom had donated at least \$1 million to him — released statements denouncing Trump's comments.

Yet none have used their economic power to actually address the problem that brought the protest on in the first place.

Now would be a fine time to take the next step. While there are a number of ways the league can contribute to this movement, there is one obvious way: supporting the Colin Kaepernick Foundation.

After Kaepernick began to raise awareness on the field, he put his money where his mouth is and created a foundation aimed at fighting oppression of all kinds globally, through education and social activism. Through this foundation, he made a pledge to "donate one million dollars plus all the proceeds of my jersey sales from the 2016 season to organizations working in oppressed communities." Imagine what could really transpire if NFL officials decided to make this same commitment.

We need to hold the NFL accountable, just as we do for other powerful American organizations. Taking a knee, banding arms, and releasing statements of support is easy compared to what the league can actually do to help fight racial injustice.

It is time for the NFL to stand up for black lives and the rights of all Americans.