



NATO 70TH ANNIVERSARY

United Actions Stand Against War p.3



70 Years Later, the German Question Remains and Divisions Increase p.8

CIVIL WAR CONDITIONS EVIDENT

Federal, State and Local Clashes on Immigration

The federal government is clashing with states and local police and sheriffs as it tries to use immigration enforcement to integrate the many policing agencies in the country into a federal command structure. Currently at the border with Mexico, for example, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are demanding that all the local forces join them in immigration enforcement. At this time,

they too are to come under military control. It is a live exercise in federal authority, including the military, over all others.

Along with broad united actions by the people both sides of the border and in cities and towns across the country defending immigrant rights, various states and counties are also opposing federal action. At times this takes the form of state laws, like those in Utah,

Clashes on Immigration • 20

PALESTINIAN LAND DAY AND MARCH OF RETURN ANNIVERSARY

Salute Determined Resistance of Palestinian People

March 30, 2019 marked the one year anniversary of the Great March of Return by Palestinians. Weekly actions of thousands have taken place since that time in Gaza along the border fence with Israel. Despite brutal attacks by Israeli troops, including killing 49 youth and injuring 6,000, yet more actions took place on the one year anniversary. Tens

of thousands faced down Israeli tanks and soldiers massed on the Gaza border.

March 30 commemorates Land Day, and it was part of Land Day actions last year that the Great March of Return was initiated. On that day in 1976, six Palestinians from Arab villages were shot and killed by Israeli forces while protesting

Salute Palestinians • 14

April edition of **Voice of Revolution**

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No to NATO

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United Actions in Washington, DC Stand Against War

No to NATO! Close All U.S. Bases Abroad! Hands Off Venezuela! These were the peoples' slogans that rang loud and clear on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of NATO's founding. The NATO Summit in Washington, DC was met by demonstrations and other actions by the people demanding *NO to NATO* and the closing of all U.S./NATO bases worldwide. A main rally and march took place on March 30, followed by conferences, concerts and an additional action on April 4 near the State Department, where NATO foreign ministers were meeting. The firm stand taken opposed NATO as a harmful, aggressive military and political bloc that stands against

the interests of the peoples. Commanded by the U.S., NATO has played a major role in the wars against Afghanistan, Libya and Syria and was largely responsible for the destruction and dismemberment of Yugoslavia twenty years ago. Politically NATO acts to impose what are called liberal democratic institutions and it organizes "training sessions" for elections and "institute building." This is despite the fact that the democratic systems in the U.S., Canada, Britain and other countries are crisis-ridden, dysfunctional, corrupt and reverting to increasingly totalitarian methods of rule.

The actions and conferences targeted the U.S. as the main force pushing war and militarization worldwide, including demands that all NATO countries utilize U.S. weaponry. They also



denounced U.S. efforts to impose regime change on Venezuela and vigorously opposed military intervention against that country, which is standing up to pursue its own path and rejecting U.S. dictate. The slogans *Hands Off Venezuela! No Sanctions, No Military Intervention!* were chanted throughout the actions.

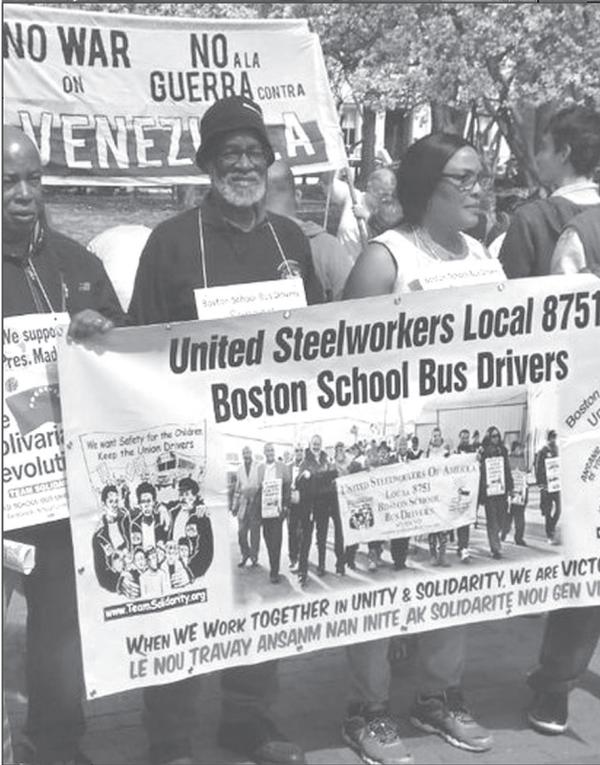
The importance of standing together as one, opposing all U.S. aggression and all aggressive wars and NATO's participation in them, stood out at the various activities. So too did the demand to close all U.S. bases abroad, including bringing an end to AFRICOM, the U.S. command in Africa where operations by special forces and other military actions by the U.S. are taking place.

Delegations from Belgium, Canada, Germany and Russia joined those from many cities across the U.S. While NATO was being promoted as the source of peace and security, the demonstrators made clear that it is the united stand of the peoples for rights that provides security. None were going to be drawn into the conflicts about whether the U.S. should withdraw from NATO, or whether more war funding should take place. On the contrary, the demand was *No to NATO, No to U.S. Wars and Regime Change*, stop militarization, oppose war funding and demand funding for the rights of the people. The importance of united actions in the U.S. and with the anti-war forces internationally was repeatedly addressed.

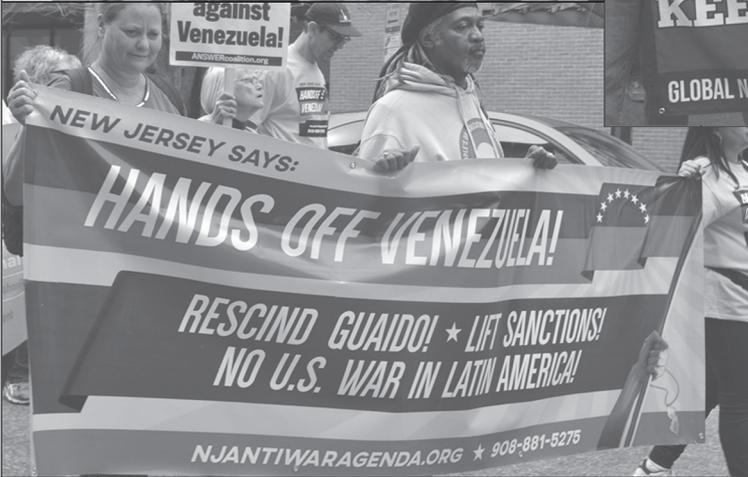
A spirited meeting celebrating the second anniversary of the Black Alliance for Peace concluded the events, with a strong stand for rights at home, ending AFRICOM, closing all U.S. bases abroad and no compromise with the warmongers, whether white or black. African Americans in their majority have long stood against war and the Alliance is working to strengthen and organize that resistance. Participants resolved to step up the fight for rights at home and abroad and to organize more united actions.



UNITED ACTIONS STAND AGAINST WAR & NATO: WASHINGTON DC



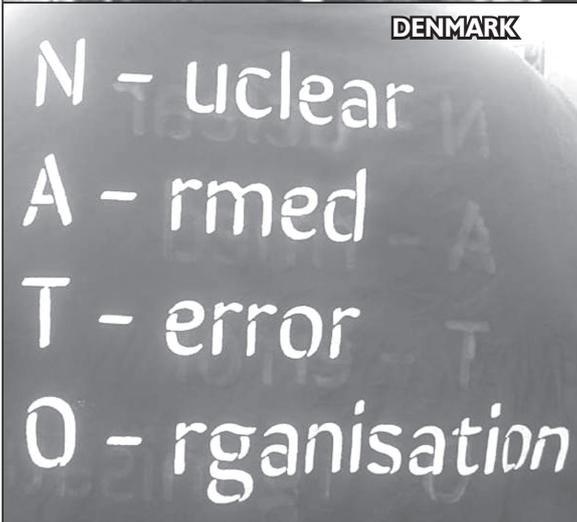
UNITED ACTIONS STAND AGAINST WAR & NATO: WASHINGTON DC



UNITED ACTIONS STAND AGAINST WAR & NATO: DC, NYC, MINNEAPOLIS



UNITED ACTIONS STAND AGAINST WAR & NATO: WORLDWIDE



MUTED NATO SUMMIT ON 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATO'S FOUNDING

70 Years Later, the German Question Remains and Divisions Increase

On April 3-4, foreign ministers from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) met in Washington, DC to mark the 70th anniversary of NATO's founding, April 4, 1949. The summit was hosted by the U.S. State Department and attended by U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo. Trump did not attend, though he met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the White House on April 2. The summit is being described as "uneventful," in part because the serious divisions that exist continue to deepen and were not resolved despite NATO being presented as the most successful alliance in history. Despite the divisions, a show of unity was in part directed against Russia and China, as a means to show that NATO is still in a position to act. "No military alliance in the world can remotely do what we do. No alliance can remotely match the power of the nations represented here today," Pompeo said.

Pompeo's remarks were also specifically intended to reassure NATO members of the U.S. commitment to collective defense. He needed to do that in view of the fact that Trump has said more than once that the U.S. might not uphold Article 5, which requires NATO countries to defend any one member if attacked. Pompeo said that NATO has been "made strong through our collective defense commitment as enshrined in Article 5, to which we all recommit today." The U.S. Ambassador to NATO repeated this as well, saying: "The United States has consistently affirmed its support for NATO, including the principle of collective defense enshrined in Article 5... the President, Vice President, Secretaries of State and Defense, and other senior U.S. officials have all underscored this."

While this is what was said, Trump and Pompeo still made a point of targeting Germany especially to increase its war funding. In this manner, it can be seen that the "German Question," as it was referred to in 1949, remains.

The "German Question" Remains

When NATO was founded in 1949, it was a period of upsurge among the peoples, who had defeated fascism. They were demanding the denazification of Germany, the dismantling of its war industry and restoration of democratic liberties as well as fighting for and forming people's democracies. NATO was formed in part to block this democratic surge and to restore Nazis to positions of power, with the U.S. playing the main role. While the peoples were striving to consolidate their victories over fascism and eliminate any remnants of the Nazis and Nazi power from their midst, the U.S. was acting to do the opposite. This included the division and occupation of Germany and formation of NATO. Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay, NATO's first Secretary General spoke to this, saying the goal for NATO was to "Keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the

Germans down."

Today the U.S. has 32,000 troops and dozens of bases in Germany. It is pushing for Germany to greatly increase funding for war, including weapons and forces. The Pentagon, for example, is demanding NATO members meet what it refers to as "4-30" — 30 battalions, 30 aircraft squadrons, 30 ships ready to move in 30 days.

In his speech Pompeo referenced Germany without naming it, saying, "Now is not the time to repeat tired excuses that our citizens don't support increased defense spending or security spending. Each nation has a duty to make the case to our people. We, as leaders, have a duty to make the case to our citizens about why this work, why these resources are important to keep not only our own countries but our alliance strong."

President Trump was more direct in comments April 2: "Germany, honestly, is not paying their fair share... They're paying close to 1 percent, and they're supposed to be paying 2 percent. And the United States, over the years, got to a point where it's paying 4.3 percent, which is very unfair...because it's 4.3 of a much larger GDP. So we're paying for a big proportion of NATO, which basically is protecting Europe."

Vice President Pence repeated the demand April 3 saying, "Germany must do more." Referring to the Nord Stream offshore natural gas pipeline from Vyborg in the Russian Federation to Greifswald in Germany, Pence said: "And we cannot ensure the defense of the West if our allies grow dependent on Russia." "It is simply unacceptable for Europe's largest economy to continue to ignore the threat of Russian aggression and neglect its own self-defense and our common defense," Pence added.

Clearly the U.S. wants to block Germany from allying with Russia, while also having it do more to act militarily to protect Europe. Meanwhile, Trump has indicated repeatedly that the U.S. is reserving for itself a potential alliance with Russia. He regularly says he wants friendly relations with Russia so when he repeatedly threatens to withdraw the U.S. from NATO, it indicates such an alliance is a factor for withdrawal. As well, with its 32,000 troops and dozens of bases on German soil, the U.S. does not appear worried about Germany becoming a stronger military power. The rest of the Europeans, however, are worried. For them the problem of "keeping the Germans down," remains. As is the case in the U.S., broad opposition exists among the people in Germany and throughout Europe to stepped up militarization, increased war funding and aggressive U.S.-led NATO wars.

Not only did the NATO Summit do nothing to resolve "the German Question," but Trump, Pence and Pompeo repeated in tandem that it is "unacceptable" for Germany not to increase war funding and that the U.S. may not continue to protect Europe. This does nothing to assuage European concerns about the rise

ORGANIZE FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT

of Germany militarily and the possible refusal of the U.S. to uphold Article 5 and even withdraw from NATO. Whatever form NATO may take in the future, U.S. dictate and conflicts within NATO, within the NATO countries themselves including the U.S. and between the U.S. and Europe will remain. NATO's expansion since the end of the Cold War has done nothing as concerns keeping Germany down or resolving these conflicts. The inter-imperialist striving for domination has only exacerbated the contradictions and increased the danger of war in Europe causing the peoples increasing concern.



Action in DC April 4 at MLK Monument directed at the public during cherry blossom festival

Force for Wars of Destruction

At the Summit, Pompeo presented NATO as a major force for peace. NATO has provided a “shield against aggression and acts as a deterrent,” he said. Creating NATO has paid “a massive dividend: decades of peace and prosperity for the West on a scale unrivaled in world history,” he said. Everyone is to forget the massive U.S.-led NATO war to destroy Yugoslavia by completely dismembering the country. Evidently we are to forget the U.S.-led NATO aggression against Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, and interference in Africa and now Latin America as Colombia has become a “global partner” of NATO, possibly to be followed by Brazil. The “deterrence” provided is to deter the striving of the peoples against war and for their rights. The upsurge after WWII to secure democracies that favor the people remains incomplete. NATO is precisely a deterrent to the completion of these democratic revolutions in Europe as well as the U.S. and Canada.

Pompeo Raises Specter of Communism

Pompeo used the occasion of the NATO Summit to once again resurrect the Cold War rhetoric about the threat of communism. He used Germany to do so. He said, “There’s a second anniversary of significance to the West that we celebrate this year too: the crumbling of the Iron Curtain... That anniversary is intimately connected to NATO. For 40 years, the NATO alliance was a bulwark against communist expansion in Europe. We were ready to invoke Article 5 at any moment if the Soviets poured through the Fulda Gap, the way that we did after 9/11. Our military superiority deterred them from acting on their designs of dominating Europe, and in the meantime, President Reagan’s military buildup drove the evil empire into bankruptcy.”

The Cold War has long since ended. The promised “peace dividend” proclaimed by Pompeo never materialized. The destruction of Yugoslavia, ongoing U.S.-led NATO wars and massive Pentagon budgets and demands for increased military funding by NATO reveal the truth of the matter. What then is the purpose in raising this specter of communism today? It is

to target the striving of the people for their rights, for societies that favor the interests of the people and their drive for an end to war and for relations of mutual respect and benefit among the peoples, as was the case 70 years ago when NATO was founded in the first place. It is to say once again that there is no alternative to imperialism, to U.S. domination, and to military and political blocs against the people such as NATO. It is to claim that history can go no further than this. The peoples must simply submit to the U.S. and its dysfunctional and outmoded democracy. The peoples say NO! as the actions show which were held against NATO in Washington, DC and elsewhere in the world at the time of the Summit and on this NATO anniversary. The peoples are fighting together for modern democracies that empower the people and block the warmongers.

Pompeo also called for NATO to extend its reach. “We must adapt our alliance to confront emerging threats too, whether that’s Russian aggression, uncontrolled migration, cyber attacks, threats to energy security, Chinese strategic competition -- including technology in 5G — and many other issues that jeopardize our people’s ideals and our collective security,” he said. To raise “uncontrolled migration” as a threat at a time Trump is threatening to close the border with Mexico and has positioned thousands of troops on the border and the crisis caused by U.S.-led wars in West Asia, is a deliberate offense. He mentions China and 5G at a time when Canada and the U.S. are already criminalizing the Chinese company Huawei, claiming its 5G network is a threat to national security. Similarly, the U.S. is targeting NATO member Turkey for purchasing a Russian missile defense system. “Turkey must choose,” Vice President Pence warned. “Does it want to remain a critical partner in the most successful military alliance in history, or does it want to risk the security of that partnership by making such reckless decisions that undermine our alliance?” Pence thundered. The U.S. is not only demanding that NATO countries increase their funding but the standardization of weapons and equipment as produced by the U.S. war industry, not any other. The rivalry is not only with China and Russia, but with the European Union as well.

The U.S. thinks that its self-serving portrayal of NATO will prevail. “Our structure is designed to empower each ally, not to subjugate it. We maintain an outstanding degree of unity,” Pompeo said. The reality is that just as NATO was brought into being as an instrument of the U.S. striving to control Europe so as to dominate Asia, it could just as well pass away as others

also strive to control Europe and dominate Asia, including the Asians themselves. Most importantly, the peoples of the world continue to hoist the banner of peace, freedom and democracy in a manner which is consistent with the actual conditions today which defy attempts by the imperialist powers with the U.S. in the lead to control the situation. NATO's anniversary Summit

was a muted affair that did nothing to resolve any of the conflicts within NATO and, especially, did nothing to "keep Russia out, Germany down and the U.S. in."

The peoples' cause for peace and security worldwide is best served by getting out of NATO and dismantling NATO. That is what 70 years of NATO reveal.

Differences Within the U.S.-Led NATO Alliance

Despite a show of support for NATO by the executive during the 70th Anniversary summit that took place in Washington, DC April 3-4, Trump has made clear the possibility of U.S. withdrawal remains. These conflicts in the United States within and between the Executive, the Congress and NATO members reflect the serious conflicts within the U.S. ruling circles over how to control Europe and dominate Asia, including holding Russia and China in check.

The conflicts and contradictions within NATO ranks and within the United States itself continue to find expression and were a feature of the 70th Anniversary Summit despite declarations of unity and strength.

On April 3, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg was invited to address a joint session of Congress by Nancy Pelosi, Democratic head of the House of Representatives and Mitch McConnell, Republican head of the Senate. It is an honor usually reserved for select heads of state. The invitation was part of the efforts by a majority in the Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike, to counter Trump's repeated threats to withdraw from NATO. The invitation followed several other actions by Congress, including the passing of a bill in the House in January, by a vote of 357-22, to support NATO and block funding for withdrawal (28 Republicans and 26 Democrats did not vote). That bill is now before the Senate.

Trump Continues Issuing Threats

Once it was known that Congress had invited Stoltenberg to speak, Trump invited him to the White House on April 2. While both used the opportunity to say NATO members have responded to U.S. demands for member states to put more into war funding, at a joint press conference held before their meeting, Trump continued to say that more is needed. "We have seven of the 28 countries currently current and the rest are trying to catch up, and they will catch up. And some of them have no problems because they haven't been paying and they're very rich. But we're looking at the two percent of GDP level. And at some point, I think it's going to have to go higher than that." This provides him the continued pretext to withdraw from NATO. When a reporter asked him directly if the U.S. would withdraw, he did not say no but repeated the same story.



"People are paying, and I'm very happy with the fact that they're paying," Trump said.

Shoring up the idea that the U.S. may withdraw from NATO is the fact that some forces within the military and Trump administration consider that the U.S. would be better able to secure its aim of world domination without the NATO commitment to defend Europe. The extensive U.S. bases throughout Europe, including in Germany where it

still has 32,000 troops stationed, shows it has greater military capabilities than all the other NATO countries put together in terms of nuclear weapons, bombers, battleships, drones and Special Forces (which now number 80,000 troops). In other words, the U.S. does not rely on NATO's military capabilities. Without NATO the U.S. would be free to act unilaterally since it would not have to take into account concerns expressed by European members like Germany and France.

This includes the constraint of Article 5 of the treaty to provide defense to any of the members in the event they are attacked. Trump questioned having to defend smaller countries that are now part of NATO, like Montenegro, saying it could trigger World War III. As well, a U.S. withdrawal from NATO permits the Trump administration to enter into whatever alliances it likes, such as an alliance with Russia to counter China while still controlling Europe. He could also enter into stronger bilateral agreements with countries like Poland and those of Eastern Europe which have integrated their forces with those of the U.S.

Relations with Russia are also a disputed area. At the press conference Trump said, "I think we'll get along with Russia. I do—I do believe that." Meanwhile, the Pentagon has said Russia and China now pose the greatest threats to the U.S. How to maintain an upper hand while both colluding and contending remains a source of conflict, as Trump has indicated,

NATO members which are in their majority European, commonly emphasize Russia as a major threat but concerns over energy supplies also mandate relations with Russia. When speaking to the Congress, Stoltenberg said: "We do not want a new arms race. We do not want a new Cold War. But we must not be naive." He said NATO had "no intention of deploying land-based nuclear weapons in Europe" but would "always take the necessary steps to provide

credible and effective deterrence.” “We need to maintain credible defense and defense for all NATO countries,” he added, which of course means relying mainly on the U.S. For Russia, however, the claim of not positioning land-based nuclear weapons rings hollow. Previously, the U.S. promised that NATO would not expand eastward to encircle Russia, which it has done. And the U.S. can position nuclear weapons on its bases whether or not NATO members agree.

The reality that those favoring withdrawal from NATO currently have the upper hand within the administration is evident from the resignation of Secretary of Defense General James Mattis. A long-time Trump supporter who remains well-respected within the military, in his resignation letter, he emphasized: “One core belief I have always held is that our strength as a nation is inextricably linked to the strength of our unique and comprehensive system of alliances and partnerships. While the U.S. remains the indispensable nation in the free world, we cannot protect our interests and serve that role effectively without maintaining strong alliances and showing respect to those allies.”

What the rulers hold in common despite their differences is the view that the U.S. is “indispensable” and must dominate. How to maintain that domination is what the in-fighting is all about. Trump’s refusal to rule out withdrawal from NATO along with the resignation by Mattis are indicators that withdrawal from NATO remains a serious consideration.

U.S. Congressional Actions

Part of the debate about U.S. withdrawal from NATO includes whether the President can act without Congressional authorization. The U.S. Constitution requires the Senate to approve treaties with a 2/3 majority, but it does not speak directly to withdrawal. Other presidents have withdrawn from treaties, such as Carter who withdrew the U.S. from the Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan at the time the U.S. recognized the People’s Republic of China, and Bush who withdrew the U.S. from the ABM treaty with Russia. The Carter case, known as *Goldwater v. Carter* went to the Supreme Court which ruled in favor of Carter.

The majority in Congress currently support NATO. The recent bill by the House is an effort to block Trump from withdrawing from NATO. It states in part that NATO “has served as a pillar of international peace and stability, a critical component of United States security, and a deterrent against adversaries and external threats.” Calling NATO “one of the most successful alliances in history,” and “the foundation of U.S. foreign policy,” the bill also states: The United States “is solemnly committed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s principle of collective defense as enumerated in Article 5.” All of this is directed at Trump’s threats. The bill also says the *Goldwater v. Carter* ruling is not “controlling legal precedent” and that it is the sense of Congress that “the President shall not withdraw the United States from NATO.” It concludes, “No funds are authorized to be appropriated, obligated, or expended to take any action to withdraw the United States from the North Atlantic Treaty.” The bill is currently before the Senate and expected to pass, possibly with enough support to counter a Trump veto. In 2017, the then Republican-controlled

House and Senate passed resolutions to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to Article 5 of the treaty.

The invitation to Stoltenberg to address the Congress was another action by Con-

gress to both counter Trump and reassure European allies that the U.S. will remain in NATO and defend Europe. Stoltenberg drew applause for noting that NATO was founded as a counter to Soviet aggression and that it remains a counter to “an aggressive and unpredictable Russia.” He claimed Russia is responsible for “attempts to interfere in democracy itself.” House leader Nancy Pelosi, another big promoter of the view about Russian interference in U.S. elections, tweeted after Stoltenberg’s speech: “For 70 years, America’s relationships with our NATO allies have formed the foundation of our efforts to make the world a more secure and peaceful place. As we mark this historic anniversary, we affirm America’s ironclad commitment to NATO and achieving permanent peace.”

U.S. Navy Admiral James G. Stavridis, a former supreme allied commander of NATO, commented: “Given the president’s evident and frequently vocalized skepticism of the alliance, it is clear that Congress — on a bipartisan basis — wants to put the full weight of the legislative branch behind NATO.” “We will never find a better pool of allies in the world than the Europeans, and this address underscores the importance of the trans-Atlantic bridge, which has been creaking a bit lately,” he added.

Stavridis is also one of many retired military, former intelligence, state and defense department officials who have publicly condemned Trump’s “national emergency” at the border with Mexico, which opens the way for use of the military inside the U.S. and against Mexico. These actions show that the conflicts over NATO and how best to secure U.S. control abroad are tied to the civil war inside the country, which threatens to become openly violent.

Imperialist war abroad and civil war at home are integrally related. The current dysfunction of Congress, budget fights that end in government shutdowns, elections that resolve none of these battles, are all contributing to the intensification of conflicts among the ruling factions who have no solution to problems at home or abroad. Congress, with its actions on NATO, is in part attempting to reassert its authority. But it is unlikely to block the continued usurping of power by the executive. Rule of law abroad and at home is no longer recognized by the office of the president, something which occurred before Trump and which he is now consolidating in a government of police powers. It is the actions of the President that will be the determining factor for whether the U.S. does or does not withdraw from NATO, but a withdrawal could well trigger the very civil war the rulers are trying to avoid.



NATO as a U.S. Protection Racket

During his presidential campaign and into 2017, Donald Trump repeatedly referred to NATO as “obsolete” and criticized lack of military spending by member countries except the U.S. At the 2018 NATO Leaders Summit held in July in Brussels, he sharply criticized other NATO countries for not dedicating at least two percent of their GDP to military spending, tweeting that the U.S. is carrying the burden of military spending in NATO, and that other countries should be spending four percent of GDP on defense, like the U.S. does. He also accused Germany of being held captive by Russia, calling German investment in an \$11 billion Baltic Sea pipeline to import Russian gas “unacceptable.” In January of this year, the *New York Times* reported that “several times over the course of 2018, Mr. Trump privately said he wanted to withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. [...] In the days around a tumultuous NATO Summit meeting last summer, [current and former officials of his administration] said Mr. Trump told his top national security officials that he did not see the point of the military alliance, which he presented as a drain on the United States.”

In recent months, the Trump administration has taken things a step further. It plans to impose increased financial demands on those countries that host U.S. troops and bases, such as Japan, south Korea, Germany and others on the basis of what is referred to as “Cost Plus 50” — that the host countries should cover the cost of hosting those U.S. troops and bases plus an additional 50 percent.

“Wealthy, wealthy countries that we’re protecting are all under notice. We cannot be the fools for others,” Trump said in a speech at the Pentagon on January 17.[1] There are differences of opinion within the U.S. ruling circles on this plan, as some consider that it will be unacceptable to U.S. partners, especially those whose populations have long resisted the U.S. presence. “In some cases, nations hosting American forces could be asked to pay five to six times as much as they do now under the ‘Cost Plus 50’ formula,” *Time Magazine* reported on March 8. “The president’s team sees the move as one way to prod NATO partners into accelerating increases in defense spending — an issue Trump has hammered allies about since taking office,” *Time* adds. This demand is said to have nearly derailed recent negotiations about the status of the 28,000 U.S. troops in south Korea. Reports indicate that the U.S. might “offer a discount” to countries that agree to align their policies closely with those of the U.S.[2]

Meanwhile, the U.S. has in place many bilateral military agreements, including Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) that permit its troops to operate with impunity in other countries and also provide a means to apply pressure for increased military spending to suit U.S. aims. A January 16, 2015 report by the U.S. government’s International Security Advisory Board on Status of Forces Agreements gives an overview of SOFAs at that time. The Executive Summary of the report states that “The United States has some form of SOFA agreement with more than 100 nations, about half under the NATO or the Partnership for Peace SOFAs, which apply, respectively to all NATO allies and most Partnership for Peace partners.[3] In addition, there are comprehensive agreements with other nations. There are, however, still countries with which the United States has significant military relationships but no SOFA. It

should be a U.S. government-wide priority to fill those gaps.”

U.S. Demand for Standardization of Weaponry

One of the matters of contention and competition amongst the U.S. imperialists and other big powers at this time is the connection between NATO’s development and the growth of the war economy both in the U.S. and worldwide, especially with regard to the world trade in arms. In addition to a certain level of spending on the military, NATO membership also requires standardization of weapons. This requires, in practice, the consolidation of weapons’ development in the U.S. Only certain approved weapons would be allowed as part of the standardization and these were invariably made in the U.S.

In Europe, the big powers resisted on the front of fighter aircraft and this led to intense competition with the U.S. which eventually spilled over into commercial aircraft with the growth of Airbus (formerly known as the European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company (EADS)). Now Boeing, having destroyed the Bombardier C-Series commuter jet, is itself in trouble and Airbus is thriving.

With monopoly comes stagnation and the law of the uneven development of the productive forces takes over. Now many countries have surpassed the U.S. in missile technology and fighter aircraft.

The latest generation of Russian fighter jet is said to be superior to the U.S. F-35 stealth fighter. India announced recently that it destroyed one of its own space satellites using a ground-based missile. Japan has also leaped past the U.S. in missile technology while China is also gaining fast in the field of missile technology and the use of Artificial Intelligence amongst others things.

Notes

1. “Trump Seeks Huge Premium From Allies Hosting U.S. Troops,” Nick Wadhams and Jennifer Jacobs, *Bloomberg*, March 8, 2019.

2. TheHill.com informs that “Countries that host permanent U.S. military installations traditionally pay a portion of the costs to house and equip the troops. The payment varies country to country and in how it is given. While some allies, such as Japan and south Korea, make cash contributions, others including Germany — where the United States has more than 30,000 troops — pay by footing the bill for land, infrastructure and construction of the military facilities, as well as waiving taxes and customs duties.”

3. NATO says its Partnership for Peace (PfP) “is a program of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO. It allows partners to build up an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation. [...] Activities on offer under the PfP program touch on virtually every field of NATO activity. [...] Currently, there are 21 countries in the Partnership for Peace program.”

NATO also has individual arrangements with a number of countries that are not part of its regional frameworks which it calls “global partners.” These presently include Afghanistan, Australia, Colombia, Iraq, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand and Pakistan.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

U.S. House of Representatives Bill Supporting NATO

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the following bill in January. It was introduced January 17 and passed January 22. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor, 357-22 with 54 representatives not voting. The bill is now before the Senate. If passed by a similar margin it is sufficient to overturn an expected veto by President Trump, which requires a 2/3 majority in both houses.

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House Resolution H.R.676—116th Congress (2019-2020)

AN ACT

To reiterate the support of the Congress of the United States for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “NATO Support Act.”

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that:

(1) The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which came into being through the North Atlantic Treaty, which entered into force on April 4, 1949, between the United States of America and the other founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, has served as a pillar of international peace and stability, a critical component of United States security, and a deterrent against adversaries and external threats.

(2) The House of Representatives affirmed in H. Res. 397, on June 27, 2017, that;

(A) NATO is one of the most successful military alliances in history, deterring the outbreak of another world war, protecting the territorial integrity of its members, and seeing the Cold War through to a peaceful conclusion;

(B) NATO remains the foundation of United States foreign policy to promote a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace;

(C) the United States is solemnly committed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s principle of collective defense as enumerated in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty; and



(D) the House of Representatives

(i) strongly supports the decision at the NATO Wales Summit in 2014 that each alliance member would aim to spend at least 2 percent of its nation’s gross domestic product on defense by 2024;

(ii) condemns any threat to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom and democracy of any NATO ally; and

(iii) welcomes the Republic of Montenegro as the 29th member of the NATO Alliance.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that:

(1) the President shall not withdraw the United States from NATO; and

(2) the case *Goldwater v. Carter* is not controlling legal precedent with respect to the withdrawal of the United States from a treaty.

SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States:

(1) to remain a member in good standing of NATO;

(2) to reject any efforts to withdraw the United States from NATO, or to indirectly withdraw from NATO by condemning or reducing contributions to NATO structures, activities, or operations, in a manner that creates a de facto withdrawal;

(3) to continue to work with NATO members to meet their 2014 Wales Defense Investment Pledge commitments; and

(4) to support robust United States funding for the European Deterrence Initiative, which increases the ability of the United States and its allies to deter and defend against Russian aggression.

SEC. 5. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF FUNDS TO WITHDRAW FROM NATO.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds are authorized to be appropriated, obligated, or expended to take any action to withdraw the United States from the North Atlantic Treaty, done at Washington, DC on April 4, 1949, between the United States of America and the other founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Passed the House of Representatives January 22, 2019.

I • Salute Palestinians

the confiscation of 5,500 acres of land from the Galilee. Since then, Land Day has been commemorated by Palestinians inside Israel as well as in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem and around the world.

Last year a Mass March of Return took place, involving thousands of people from Gaza and the West Bank who marched for more than 46 days to converge en masse on the Gaza Strip's roughly 30 mile-long eastern border with Israel. The action culminated on May 14 to mark the 70th anniversary of Al Nakba (The Catastrophe) — the brutal and genocidal displacement of the Palestinian people, which accompanied the creation of the Zionist state of Israel that continues to this day.

Continuous protests have been held every Friday since last March, with the Zionists regularly committing crimes, using live ammunition and the chemical weapon tear gas against protesters. A UN Commission of Inquiry (see p.18) found that Israel's violations of human rights and international humanitarian law warrant criminal investigation and prosecution. Israel, backed by the U.S. militarily and politically, refuses to submit to such prosecution. The courage and persistence which mark the resistance of the people in the occupied territory of Palestine are legendary. The resistance of the Palestinian people to the Zionist occupiers by which, generations later, all those displaced as well as their descendants fully affirm their right of return as codified in international law is indomitable.

Voice of Revolution salutes the Palestinian people, our hearts our filled with deep appreciation for their humanity in the face of



the most horrific crimes. We firmly condemn all U.S. support for Israel and demand that it end now. Whatever plan Trump may soon propose, what is needed is to *End the Occupation Now!* Israel must return to the 1967 borders and end all its aggression and crimes. Both the U.S., which ensures Israel can commit these crimes, and Israel, must be prosecuted for their war crimes and crimes against humanity and those at the highest levels held accountable.

There can be no doubt that the resistance of the Palestinians will prevail!

‘Our People Will Not Back Down’: Gaza Marks Great March of Return Anniversary

AlJazeera

Tens of thousands of Palestinians rallied at the Israel-Gaza fence to mark the first anniversary of the Great March of Return protests, facing off against Israeli tanks and troops massed on the fortified perimeter.

Israeli forces on Saturday used live rounds, rubber bullets and tear gas on the protesters, killing three 17-year-old boys, and wounding at least 207 people, according to Gaza's health ministry.

Palestinians are demanding the right to return to lands from which their families were violently expelled during the founding of Israel in 1948. They are also calling for an end to Israel's and Egypt's 12-year blockade of Gaza.

“We will move towards the borders even if we die,” said Yusef Ziyada, 21, his face painted in the colours of the

Palestinian flag. “We are not leaving. We are returning to our land.”

Despite heavy rain, some 40,000 people were gathered at the frontier area, the Israeli army said.

Describing the rally as “completely peaceful”, Mohamed Ridwan, a 34-year-old protester who works at a Gaza think-tank, told *Al Jazeera* the huge turnout on Saturday was “ample proof that our people will not back down until they gain their legitimate rights.”

Bahaa Abu Shammal, a 26-year-old activist, said he was at a protest site “very far away from the separation fence,” but still, nearly “suffocated due to Israeli tear gas.” He said, “We need to break the brutal siege we suffer from. We want to return to our lands.”

49 KILLED SINCE MARCH 2018, 6000 INJURED

March of Return Protests Continue as Israel Targets Youth

At least 49 children have been killed at the Gaza border fence since the start of protests one year ago, demanding the right of return and the end of the siege on Gaza. According to the UN more than 6,000 children have so far been injured in Gaza protests by a combination of injuries including those hit by live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas. According to the UN's World Health Organization (WHO), 2,980 children were so badly wounded that they required hospital care. Thousands have sustained serious wounds, including blindness, head injuries, and amputations. According to WHO, 21 children have had their upper or lower limbs amputated following injuries inflicted by Israeli troops as they participated in weekly demonstrations. The protests marked the one year anniversary of the Great March of Return and despite these brutal attacks, youth remain in the forefront of the actions.

Many of those who survived have suffered life-changing injuries and have been denied, or been unable to access, adequate medical care to address their needs. The demand for specialist

medical support has far exceeded Gaza's health system, which has been undermined by years of the U.S.-backed Israeli blockade. According to WHO, 80 percent of children injured at the protests who applied to leave Gaza to receive emergency medical treatment in Israel over the last year have had their permits rejected or delayed.

According to the UN, Israeli violence at the March of Return demonstrations injured more than 20,000 adults between March 30, 2018 and January 31, 2019, and many more have occurred since then. Four Israeli soldiers were injured. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights reports the deaths of nearly 200 Palestinian protesters shot by Israeli sharpshooters.

Peoples worldwide have demanded an end to the Israeli attacks and the seige of Gaza, meant to bring Palestinians to their knees. But the vitality of the protests, which again occurred across the West Bank and Gaza on the one year anniversary March 30, 2019 show that the Palestinians remain determined and undaunted.



Visit our website: usmlo.org

Paramedic's Father: "My son thought he wouldn't be shot wearing his vest."

A young paramedic volunteer was killed by Israeli fire, Wednesday [March 27] morning, during violent confrontations that broke out in Dehehisheh refugee camp, in the south of Bethlehem, while wearing his medical relief uniform.

The father of Sajed Mezher, Abdul-Hakeem Mezher, spoke about the last moments of the young man's life and his determination to extend a helping hand to the wounded youth.

Abdul-Hakeem said that he woke up at dawn and was preparing his sons to go to their schools. Among them was Sajed, who was studying for a university exam. At the outbreak of confrontations, Sajed insisted on going out and helping the injured with the paramedic crews.

"I begged him not to leave, I told him that the soldiers wouldn't care if he was wearing a medical vest or not, but he insisted on going. He thought they wouldn't shoot someone wearing a medical vest," the father said.

"He told me that he cannot abandon the wounded at this moment, saying he was trained to provide humanitarian aid at times like this. He told me not to worry and that he was protected under international law wearing his official uniform... but, he was still shot and killed."

Popular committees announced a general strike following the killing of Mizher, who was buried in his final resting place at the Martyr's Cemetery, in Irtas village. Further confrontations broke out at the northern entrance of Bethlehem, following the funeral.

The Palestinian Medical Relief Society, in a statement, said that Sajed was shot in the abdomen with live ammunition as he was performing his duty dressed in his first aid uniform, during a raid by Israeli forces on the camp; he later succumbed to his wounds at the hospital. The Society called on its partners to condemn, unequivocally, this "severe violation of international humanitarian law by Israel, and to demand the immediate cessation of attacks on medical personnel and other protected persons."

Army attacks children while leaving their school in West Bank city

Israeli soldiers attacked Palestinian school children while they were leaving their school in the Israeli army-controlled part of the southern West Bank city of Hebron. Soldiers threw stun grenades at Hebron Elementary School for Boys and harassed the students in the street as they left their school.

Previously, Palestinian children going to or leaving their schools in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron, known as H2, were accompanied by members of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH), an international civilian monitoring force, until Israel canceled their mandate in February and kicked them out of the West Bank after 22 years of service.

Now, Israeli settlers and army harassment of Palestinian school children has become rampant.

Jailing of Youth

Israeli forces detained at least 19 Palestinians, including many minors, across the occupied West Bank, on predawn raids March 27 in anticipation of demonstrations March 30.

The Palestine Prisoner's Society (PPS) said that Israeli forces detained three Palestinians in the southern West Bank district of Bethlehem, six in the central West Bank district of Jerusalem, seven in the central West Bank district

of Ramallah, seven Palestinians were detained and one in the northern West Bank district of Nablus. In the northern West Bank district of Jenin, another two Palestinians were detained. PPS identified them as Qassam Muhammad Jabarin and Sultan Muayed al-Amar.

According to prisoners rights group Addameer, there are 5,440 Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli prisons, including more than 20 minors, 46 of them under 16 years old.

A recent report by the Palestinian Detainees Committee said 250 Palestinian youth under 18 are being deprived of basic rights in Israel jails.

They are being subjected to many forms of oppression, torture and degrading treatment. The report brought out that Israeli forces have arrested nearly 10,000 Palestinian youth since the Second Intifada in September 2000.

According to the report, Israeli forces subjected the detained children to brutal treatment including arresting them from their homes late at night, interrogating them without a lawyer, food or drink and subjecting them to physical and psychological maltreatment including severe beatings, insults, threats and intimidation to obtain confessions under pressure.

"Since the uprising of October 2015, the number of Palestinian children in Israeli jails has significantly increased, reaching more than 400 children in some months; the highest numbers since February 2009," the report said.

The committee said over the past four years Israel has adopted a number of laws targeting Palestinian youth including issuing long jail terms for minor offenses. It called on the international community and all human and children's rights groups to intervene and end the suffering of Palestinian youth detainees.



Condemn Trump's Effort to Claim Israeli Annexation of Syria's Golan Heights is Legitimate



Demonstration in Aleppo, Syria rejecting Trump's claims and demanding that the Golan Heights be returned to Syria

On March 25 President Trump signed a presidential proclamation claiming Israel has sovereignty over the Golan Heights, land belonging to Syria that Israel annexed by force in the 1967 war and has since illegally occupied. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was with Trump at the White House as he signed the proclamation. The action was in part designed to support Netanyahu's re-election as Israeli Premier in elections April 10. It also was meant to intimidate the Palestinians as they prepared for their Land Day demonstrations and March of Return anniversary actions March 30. The Palestinians showed in their tens of thousands that their resistance will persist, undaunted and with even greater determination to secure their Right of Return. Syrians also responded with mass actions across the country denouncing Trump's actions and calling for the return of the Golan Heights to Syria. Countries worldwide also denounced it, as it opens the way for further annexations by Israel and threatens the sovereignty of all in the region.

Netanyahu made a point of listing actions taken by Trump that assist both the U.S. and Israel, their guard dog in the Middle East: "Israel has never had a better friend than you," Netanyahu said, giving the examples of U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear agreement with Iran, restoration of sanctions on Iran and the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital leading to the relocation of the U.S. embassy there. Recognition of Jerusalem and now Israel's theft of the Golan Heights are provocations not only against the Palestinians but Arabs in general. They are also both contrary to many UN resolutions which the U.S. is duty-

bound to uphold. As one example, last November the United Nations General Assembly specifically voted to say the Israeli annexation was not valid and lacked any juridical value. For the first time the U.S. voted against the resolution, along with Israel, while the rest of the world voted in favor.

Much as the U.S. does for all its aggressive wars and now actions at the border with Mexico, "national security" was given as justification. It is clear however that the action will increase tensions and insecurity, as it is recognized as a U.S. means to dictate borders. The proclamation states: "Any possible future peace agreement in the region must account for Israel's need to protect itself from Syria and other regional threats. Based on these unique circumstances, it is therefore appropriate to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights." Netanyahu echoed this, saying the high ground "invaluable" to the national security of Israel. The proclamation also more generally serves to legitimize the use of force for territorial plunder. It also justifies further Israeli annexations in the future of the West Bank and Jerusalem, as its illegal settlements are already doing.

Syria's Foreign Ministry immediately rejected Trump's claim, calling it "a flagrant aggression of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, turning a blind eye to all international reactions that condemned such resolution." The Syrian Arab News Agency reported the Ministry official said, "The US president has no right or legal capacity to legalize the occupation or usurp the others' land by force... and this hostile U.S. policy makes the region and the world subject to more dangers."

Cuba Condemns U.S. Recognition of Occupied Syrian Golan as Israeli Territory

Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba expresses its strongest condemnation of the declared intention by the government of the United States to recognize the occupied Syrian Golan as territory of Israel, which is a serious and flagrant violation of the United Nations' Charter, of International Law, and of the pertinent Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 497 of 1981.

This new manoeuver of Washington, which violates the legitimate interests of the Syrian people and of the Arab and Islamic nations, will have serious consequences for stability and security in the Middle East, and will further increase the tensions in this volatile region.

Cuba urges the Security Council to fulfill the responsibility

granted to it by the UN Charter to maintain international peace and security, and to adopt the necessary decisions to stop this unilateral action of the United States in support of Israel in its intentions to annex the occupied Syrian territory of the Golan Heights.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba will continue to endorse the demand of the Syrian government for the recovery of the Golan Heights, snatched away by Israel in 1967, and once more demands the total and unconditional retreat of Israel from the Syrian Golan and from all occupied Arab territories.

Havana, March 23, 2019

(Non-official translation.)

UN Inquiry into 2018 Gaza Protests Concludes Israel's Violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Warrant Criminal Investigation and Prosecution

An independent UN report into last year's protests along Gaza's border fence involving Israeli security forces, that resulted in the shooting deaths of more than 180 Palestinians, concluded on [February 28] that there are "reasonable grounds" to believe Israel violated international humanitarian law.

There was "no justification" for Israeli forces to use live rounds, according to a press release issued by the UN Commission of Inquiry into the 2018 Gaza protests.

"The Commission has found reasonable grounds to believe that Israeli security forces committed serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law," Chairperson Santiago Canton told journalists in Geneva.

He added: "These violations clearly warrant criminal investigation and prosecution and we call on Israel to conduct meaningful investigations into these serious violations and to provide timely justice for those killed and injured."

Created by the 47-Member UN Human Rights Council in May last year, the Commission of Inquiry was tasked with investigating all violence linked to anti-Israeli demonstrations on the Israel-Gaza border from March 30 to December 31, 2018.

In total, the Commission conducted 325 interviews with victims and witnesses and analyzed audio-visual material showing demonstrators being shot.

Its findings indicate that Israeli Security Forces injured 6,106 Palestinians with live ammunition at protest sites during the period of its mandate, while another 3,098 Palestinians were

injured by bullet fragmentation, rubber-coated metal bullets or by tear gas canisters.

Four Israeli soldiers were injured at the demonstrations, the report also found, noting that one Israeli soldier was killed on a protest day "but outside the protest sites."

Ahead of the one-year anniversary of the beginning of the protests on March, 30, 2018, which Gazans refer to as the "Great March of Return," the Commission of Inquiry underscored the need for Israel and the Hamas-controlled Palestinian authorities to do more to protect civilians, who continue to demonstrate near the border fence every Friday.

"The Commission found reasonable grounds to believe that Israeli snipers shot at journalists, health workers, children and persons with disabilities, knowing they were clearly recognizable as such," it said in a statement.

Commissioner Betty Murungi described how an 11-year-old boy was shot while playing football near the fence with Israel. He subsequently had one of his legs amputated.

"Although the killings have lessened, we still see protected groups of individuals, including children, still being killed as recently as three weeks ago," said Commissioner Sara Hossain.

She added that paramedics and journalists also continue to be injured at demonstration sites, while also dismissing the idea that the protesters were intent on violent acts.

"We found that in all of the demonstrations, there was violence in the form of the use of the throwing of stones and burning

SALUTE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE



of tires by a minority of demonstrators,” she said, adding that “the vast majority” were not involved in any form of violence.

“There were women and children present, there were people having poetry readings, playing music, waving flags, things that can’t in any way be considered to be violent,” she insisted: “I think the characterization of all the demonstrators as violent is something we wouldn’t agree with.”

De Facto Authorities ‘Must Encourage Peaceful Protests’

In addition to the appeal to Israel to cooperate with an investigation into the killings, Commission chairperson Santiago Canton called on the de facto authorities in Gaza to ensure that

demonstrations were peaceful.

“The Commission finds that these protests were a call for help from a population in despair,” Santiago Canton said. “Not only Israel but also the de facto authorities led by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority have responsibilities towards them.

Mr Santiago also noted the Commission’s call for Israel to lift the blockade of Gaza, and in particular allow those in need of urgent medical care to leave the territory, after it found that hospitals there were “literally overwhelmed by the sheer number of death and injuries” after demonstrations on May 14.

The Commission of Inquiry’s full report was presented to the Human Rights Council on March 18.

I • Clashes on Immigration

Colorado, New York, California and Washington which in various ways stand against federal actions. Utah's recently passed law, for example, blocks the federal government from automatically deporting people convicted of misdemeanors that carry a sentence of one year or more (see below). California and New York are sanctuary states and have similar laws to Utah's.

Elsewhere, resistance is at the county and local area, by sheriffs refusing to cooperate with ICE. In those situation, along with threats, ICE and similar federal authorities work with state legislatures to pass laws requiring cooperation. These are being resisted, not only by the communities impacted, but by the sheriffs themselves. North Carolina is one such example (see p.21).

These clashes are significant in a situation where Trump has already declared a "national emergency" on the southern border and could declare one more broadly. Or he could declare martial law in the name of "national security." Then the military openly takes control at the state and local level.

As resistance among the people broadens and even other policing agencies oppose federal action, the need for control, by the Commander-in-Chief, of all the policing agencies at all levels increases. The already continuing resistance by various authorities, whether state legislatures or sheriffs or local police show, these clashes are increasing. They are part of the growing conditions of civil war, currently still hidden but conditions that could develop into an open violent conflict among the rulers as they vye for power.

It is a situation where every effort will be made to intimidate and threaten resistance and call on all to instead line up behind one or the other faction. State forces, like Governor Cuomo, for example, presents himself as "pro-immigrant," while on the ground ICE and other policing agencies across the state, but especially in New York City, are notorious for their anti-immigrant, anti-youth stand. The solution does not lie with the rich and their contending interests. Rather it lies with stepping up the organized resistance defending the rights of all.

New Utah Law Protects Immigrants

Utah is one of just a handful of states to pass legislation that helps noncitizens avoid deportation if they are convicted of a misdemeanor. The bill, which was signed into law by Governor Gary Herbert on March 25, clarifies that misdemeanor convictions in Utah can no longer be interpreted as aggravated felonies for immigration purposes, avoiding automatic deportation for a crime as simple as shop-lifting. To make this happen, the bill reduces the maximum possible sentence for misdemeanors in Utah by a single day — from 365 days to 364 days.

The federal government says any conviction, including most misdemeanors, that have a sentence of one year or more will be categorized as an "aggravated felony," requiring deportation. This action was taken in part to target many workers and organizers who have lived in the U.S. for decades, often playing leading roles in resistance at the workplace and in communities. Many with green cards have also been deported. It is also the case that even if the sentence the person is given is less than a year, say 30 days, as long as the offense carries a sentence of one year or more, the federal government still requires deportation. And it prevents immigration judges from any discretion in the



Utah youth stand together with undocumented youth saying No Human Being is Illegal

matter — deportation is mandatory. The law blocks this action by the federal government by reducing the sentence to less than a year.

Utah is not the first state to make this policy change. She joins states like Washington, California and Nevada, that have passed so-called 364-day laws. Colorado and New York also adopted similar protections.

Sheriffs in North Carolina Refuse to Cooperate with ICE

In just four days in February, federal immigration officials arrested more than 220 undocumented people in North Carolina. They were retaliating against five newly elected sheriffs who had announced they would cut certain ties with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Mecklenburg County, which includes Charlotte, is one of the areas in dispute. Mecklenburg County Sheriff Garry McFadden ran and won last year on ending the county's participation in the controversial federal 287(g) program, which called for participation between local law enforcement and ICE. Whenever ICE requested what are known as "detainers," local police and sheriffs were required to hold people for 48 hours. This was done even if they had not been convicted, or were citizens but ICE profiled them as undocumented, or they had paid a fine and were free to go, etc.

North Carolina sheriffs' offices for years had been working hand in hand with ICE in its efforts to intimidate and arrest undocumented people. Under the 287(g) program in Mecklenburg county, local law enforcement have transferred more than 15,000 thousand people to ICE over the past 13 years in Charlotte alone. ICE's field director for the region said the mass arrests in February were "the direct conclusion of dangerous policies of not cooperating" with the agency.

Last year, voters in the state's seven largest counties elected new sheriffs, all of them African American and five of them stating they would not honor detainer requests from ICE. Five are the first black sheriffs to be elected in their respective county's history. Those wins were the result of intense organizing around the 287(g) program and a united stand against unjust policing and brutality against immigrants and African Americans.

After the new sheriffs were elected, ICE's retaliation was swift. In Asheville in February, ICE agents — wearing identifying uniforms, but driving a vehicle resembling that of an employment contractor, with ladders on top — went into a Hendersonville community and arrested four people. When the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department held a forum at a church community center in Charlotte and invited immigrants and undocumented people to talk to police chiefs and McFadden, the sheriff. ICE agents showed to harass and bully people. Across the state, hundreds were arrested, most not for any crime but simply for not having documentation, a civil offense.

An ICE official made this threat: "Any local jurisdiction thinking that refusing to cooperate with ICE will result in a decrease in local immigration enforcement is mistaken. Local jurisdictions that choose to not cooperate with ICE are likely to see an increase in ICE enforcement activity, as in jurisdictions that do not cooperate with ICE the agency has no choice but to conduct more at-large arrest operations."



In addition, with ICE's assistance, the state legislature intervened to assist ICE, passing a bill that would force sheriffs to cooperate with the agency. ICE helped them to craft it. The bill's top sponsor, state Representative Destin Hall said, "it's no secret that we've actually worked with federal law enforcement officers in crafting this bill." The bill, HB 370, forces sheriff's deputies to ask people about their immigration status regardless of the type of criminal charge they face. And it mandates officers to report and hand people over to ICE, and to comply with any ICE request accompanied by a detainer. The North Carolina Sheriff's Association announced that it opposed the bill, but it passed. The Governor has yet to sign it into law.

The federal government, using immigration, is striving to bring the local and state policing agencies under federal and even military control, as is occurring now at the border. Programs like 287(g) are one part of that, as are ICE raids despite opposition, efforts by the federal government to sue sanctuary states like New York and California. These conflicts between the states and federal government reflect the inability of the rulers to solve these problems or lessen their conflicts, which contribute to conditions of civil war.

The people's resistance standing up for rights — of immigrants, refugees and African Americans in this case — shows the way forward.

Civil Rights and Immigrants' Rights Organizations Issue a Statewide Travel Alert in Florida

ACLU of Florida

Civil rights and immigrants' rights leaders issued a travel alert informing individuals traveling to Florida to anticipate the possible violation of their rights if Senate Bill 168 and House Bill 527 become Florida law.

These bills prohibit all localities in the state from adopting policies or procedures that limit entanglement with federal immigration enforcement. They also require each and every Florida county and municipality to expend already limited local resources to enforce federal immigration law, including complying with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) detainer requests that could expose them to significant legal and financial liability—whose costs would ultimately be borne by Florida taxpayers.

The alert comes amid these bills' steady progress in the Florida State legislature and cautions both Florida travelers and residents, especially Black, brown and Latinx communities, of the increased likelihood of racial profiling, unjust detention, and possible deportation if these anti-immigrant bills pass. [...]

In addition to the irreparable human cost these bills would create for immigrant communities and communities of color across the state, these bills would also expose counties and other government entities to potential legal and financial liabilities by forcing local authorities to comply with ICE's flawed detainer system. Last month, a report revealed that in just two years after agreeing to work with ICE, Miami-Dade County records showed that 420 people listed as U.S. citizens had false detainer requests issued against them. Its findings came on the heels of three lawsuits that have recently been filed against Florida authorities for holding people on detainers. Two cases were brought by U.S. citizens—Garland Creedle and Peter Sean Brown—who were held for ICE by Miami-Dade and Monroe County respectively. The third case is a class action against Miami-Dade County.

"ICE's broken detainer system has wrongfully disrupted the lives and families of Floridians," said Micah Kubic, executive director of the ACLU of Florida. "If either SB 168 and HB 527 become law, then we'd find this disruption occurring on a statewide level. Forcing Florida law enforcement agencies...threatens the civil rights of all Floridians. The Constitution guarantees that every person should have due process and the right to equal treatment, regardless of their citizenship."

Besides issuing the travel alert, the coalition of civil rights and immigrants' rights organizations has also issued information on the negative economic impact of this proposed legislation and has advised corporations doing business in Florida of these risks as well as the increased likelihood of constitutional violations of their clients traveling to the state.

"It's shameful that the state of Florida seeks to further harass immigrant communities and erode public safety," said Thomas Kennedy, Florida Immigrant Coalition Political Director. "Taking



precious local resources away from law enforcement to further target Floridian families for deportation comes at an extremely high financial and moral cost. The insidious attacks against immigrants on the national level are being amplified by Florida lawmakers pushing for anti-immigrant policies. It's more important than ever for immigrants to feel like they can turn to their local elected officials and police force to protect them. Instead, immigrant communities are being threatened, profiled, harassed and detained in greater numbers. Florida lawmakers need to realize that there will be consequences for attacking our families. The world is watching Florida right now, and what we do next as a state will determine whether people will still want to visit us and if industry leaders still feel comfortable doing business with us."

Action at the National Border Patrol Museum

Tornillo: The Occupation

The protest at the Border Patrol Museum in El Paso was a collaboration between local residents and activists from around the country. Recognizing the interlocking nature of all our struggles, we staged an intervention to uplift and remember both the experiences of migrant families and the many lives that have been lost. Since its inception in 1924 the United States Border Patrol has expanded a colonial system that inflicts violence and death along the U.S.-Mexico border.

We believe that the Border Patrol and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) should be held accountable for their human rights violations. We believe all migrants deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. We assert the only crisis on the border is the experiences of vulnerable migrant and undocumented populations bearing the weight of U.S. immigration and foreign policy and Indigenous peoples who have been terrorized and harassed by Customs and Border Patrol on Tribal lands. We stand behind all migrant indigenous families exercising their ancestral claim to migration in the Americas.

We took action because the museum and spaces like it exhibit a one-sided perspective of what is happening on the border. Nowhere in the museum would you find the problematic reality of the Border Patrol and its history of oppressive treatment towards indigenous peoples of this land, asylum seekers, and migrants. Our presence in the space was to center the voices that were missing from this memorial and the human rights violations inflicted upon them: Jakelin Caal Maquín, Felipe Gómez Alonzo, Claudia Patricia Gómez González, and the more than 100 others who have died as a consequence of Border Patrol violence. They died because the action of Border Patrol. They deserve to be remembered in Border Patrol spaces.

We are in a crisis of the consciousness of this country. A path towards reconciliation cannot begin unless institutions responsible for telling this country's story take that responsibility seriously and tell its whole truth. We must, as we have historically, fight for the sanctity of black and brown lives. It is irresponsible for any institution to claim to be apolitical while erasing the entire history of a people and using politically charged words, like "illegal alien" in their exhibits.

We recognize that an injustice anywhere is an injustice everywhere. Therefore, we will continue to resist state-sanctioned violence that places the lives and memories of law enforcement above those who have died as a result of systems of oppression, whether it be at the U.S. Borders, in Palestine, or in the streets of Ferguson, El Paso, Albuquerque/Tiwa Territory, or Tucson.



No one is free until we all are free.

Protesters from Museum Action Face Criminal Charges

Sixteen activists are facing criminal charges stemming from a February 2019 protest at the National Border Patrol Museum in El Paso, Texas. The activists were part of a coalition of various struggles that traveled from across the U.S. to El Paso to bring attention to the inhumane detention of children at the now-infamous Tornillo detention facility.

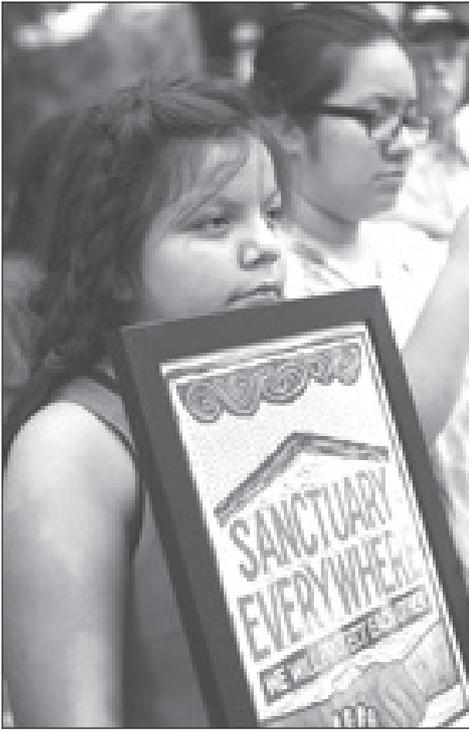
The sixteen activists are facing felony and misdemeanor charges and warrants have been issued for their arrest. El Paso police have grossly inflated the charges from this nonviolent protest in an apparent attempt to intimidate these individuals and stop others from standing up and speaking out against the human rights abuses being committed at the southern border.

These sixteen activists are facing potential prison time for their nonviolent protest. Meanwhile, the true criminals, the people separating families and putting children in cages, have not been brought to justice.

Stand with these advocates who are exposing the Trump administration's violence and donate what you can (see <https://www.facebook.com/creativebrownresistance/>).

Federal Court Blocks Trump's Forced Return to Mexico Policy

ACLU, April 8, 2019



“A federal court has temporarily blocked the Trump administration’s new policy that forced asylum seekers to return to Mexico and remain there while their cases are considered.

The American Civil Liberties Union, Southern Poverty Law Center, and Center for Gender & Refugee Studies successfully sought the preliminary injunction against what

the administration calls, in an Orwellian twist, the “Migrant Protection Protocols.”

Judy Rabinovitz, deputy director of the ACLU’s Immigrants’ Rights Project, who argued the case, had this reaction to today’s ruling from U.S. District Judge Richard Seeborg:

“The court strongly rejected the Trump administration’s unprecedented and illegal policy of forcing asylum seekers to return to Mexico without hearing their claims...”

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of 11 individual asylum seekers and organizational plaintiffs Innovation Law Lab, the Central American Resource Center of Northern California, Centro Legal de la Raza, the University of San Francisco School of Law Immigration and Deportation Defense Clinic, Al Otro Lado, and the Tahirih Justice Center.

“Today’s victory is especially important amidst reports that the Trump administration is planning to move toward even more extreme immigration policies. The decision will prevent incredibly vulnerable individuals from being trapped in dangerous conditions in Mexico, but it is only a step in a much larger fight. We are a nation of laws, and we cannot and will not allow elected officials to undermine those laws in an effort to implement an anti-immigrant agenda. We will keep fighting,” said Melissa Crow, senior supervising attorney of the

Southern Poverty Law Center.

The lawsuit cites violations of the *Immigration and Nationality Act*, the *Administrative Procedure Act*, as well as the United States’ duty under international human rights law not to return people to dangerous conditions.

“Today’s ruling recognizes that the forced return policy failed to provide adequate safeguards to protect asylum seekers from persecution. In issuing the preliminary injunction, the court has rejected the government’s attempt to return asylum seekers to Mexico in violation of U.S. laws as well as our international obligations to refugees,” said Karen Musalo, director of the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies.

The ruling is at: <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/innovation-law-lab-v-nielsen-order-granting-motion-preliminary-injunction>

