

Editorial

NATO is Arming Itself to Attack the Peoples of the World

Socorro Gomes
President, World Peace Council

In the last May 20 and 21, NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, held its summit meeting of heads of states. These days were accompanied by manifestations in several parts of the world. Thousands of people went to the streets in Chicago, Lisbon and Athens demanding the dismantling of which is the main imperialist war machine and repudiating his belligerent climb in the Middle East.

In statements, the member organizations of the World Peace Council (WPC) reaffirmed the requirement of the end of all foreign military bases and NATO installations worldwide.

NATO is a military offensive structure, responsible since its creation for uncountable crimes against humanity like recent aggressions against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. Imperialism has promoted with its monstrous war machine, the deepening of international relations militarization, assaulting peoples and nations, and leaving where it pass wreckers and rivers of blood with the only objective of imposing its domain and plunder natural resources.

Since its last summit in Portugal, NATO has broadened its goals, defining its area of acting all regions throughout the world and it has extended the range of false pretexts to justify its wars. It does that using corollaries like "war against terror", "no proliferation" and defense of "human rights" with weak excuses to assault peoples and invade sovereign nations. It uses these arguments to justify their high military spent in spite of deep economic, financial and social crisis which the countries members of NATO are living.

We denounce that NATO maintains a huge military budget which overcomes 70% of all military spent of the planet. It happens at the cost of squeeze policies against workers, especially from the USA and Europe.

In a moment of serious economic crisis, imperialism doesn't hesitate in use the force to take possession of new sources of strategic resources, and control routes and commercial flux. In this sense, we denounce the trying of militarization in the South Atlantic with the Fourth Fleet of USA, the installation of military bases in the continent and the presence of old English colonialism in Malvinas Island.

We denounce also the growing of menaces and aggressions in the Middle East, underling the provocations to Syrian and Iran.

We reaffirm that the struggle for dismantling NATO will be one of the central themes in debates and actions of WPC, which will meet in World Assembly between July 20 and 23 in Katmandu, Nepal. It will be a great event in defense of peace, international solidarity and the right of peoples' sovereign. ■

Syria: The Unfolding Spectre of the Imperialist Designs in the Middle East

Chris Mathlaco

Coordinator of the South African Peace Initiative and Member of the WPC Secretariat

The storms are gathering! There are going to be upheavals as the drumbeats of war are getting even louder as the military aggressive alliance of the U.S. and its allies edges ever closer to unleashing yet another spectre of a savage and destructive war on Syria after the recent massacre in Houla. Just as in Libya, the pretexts are set and the 'dye is cast'. The world's major mainstream media outlets are hard at work churning out every possible reason to justify military intervention and are awash with whipping up emotions in preparations for the final moment of assault against the peoples of Syria and their country. There are reported stories of military build-up already on the Jordanian-Syrian border near the villages of the north Jordan city of Al-Mafraq, reports *Boiling Frogs Post*.

If the recent war rhetoric of Susan Rice, U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations (UN), some in the European Union (EU) and the expulsion of Syrian ambassadors are anything to go by, the 'U.S. and its allies are prepared to circumvent the UN', and create a repeat of the Libya situation in Syria. This much was revealed when Rice (addressing the media after a UN Security Council meeting on Syria on May 30, 2012 in New York City), is reported to have said:

"Members of the international community [meaning the U.S. and its allies] are left with the option only of having to



World Peace Council Press Conference, Caracas, Venezuela

consider whether they are prepared to take actions outside of the Annan plan and the authority of this council."

Rice did not specify what 'actions' she meant, but that much was clear of what the imperialists were contemplating. It must be remembered that both the U.S. and some European countries had earlier imposed their own sanctions on Syria outside the UN. So there are real fears that her words could mean unleashing the military might of the world super-powers. Rice said that, the worst but most probable scenario in Syria is "a failure of Annan's peace plan and a spreading conflict that could create a major crisis not only in Syria but also in the entire region." She continued: "The Syrian government

has made commitments. It has blatantly violated those commitments, and, I think it's quite clear, as we have said for many weeks if they continue to do so there should be consequences."

Rice's comments are a disturbing reminder of what happened in 1999 when the U.S. and NATO intervened in the former Yugoslavia without a UN Security Council mandate.

This war rhetoric, it must be said, is against a backdrop of unverified information, as to who was indeed responsible for the atrocious Houla massacre and on-going terrorists attacks against villages, which are on the increase. Indeed, this has just spurred on the military

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Canadian Peace Congress Condemns Canada's Foreign Ministry Basing Agreements

Canadian Government Seeks Asia-Pacific Base to Support US/NATO "Pivot to Asia"

The Canadian Minister of Defence, Peter MacKay, has approached the government of Singapore with a proposal to establish a Canadian military base there. MacKay has described the proposed base as a "logistics facility" for disaster relief efforts, but has also explicitly stated that the base would be used to support the US/NATO "pivot to Asia."

The Canadian Peace Congress opposes and condemns efforts by the Canadian government to develop foreign military bases, such as the proposed base in Singapore. Below is a statement on the issue from the Canadian Peace Congress Executive Council from June 2011:

The Canadian Peace Congress condemns and calls for an immediate halt to the Canadian government's negotiations for military basing rights as part of the Operational Support Hubs Network, and abrogating and renouncing rights already negotiated with Germany and Jamaica. As Defence Minister Peter MacKay has already admitted, Canada's "military tempo" is at the highest levels since

the Korean War. Instead of opening the way for more bombings and destruction with basing rights spread throughout the world, Canada should reverse its military aggression, which is only in the interests of an imperialist minority and against the interests of the peace-loving majority. The basing agreements allow the Canadian military to enter other countries at any time, violating the sovereignty of the host country, in order to rain death and destruction on a third country.

Because US imperialism is getting exhausted from the resistance to its occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as from the capitalist economic crisis, Canada has in MacKay's words "become a go-to" country to meet the global demands of Canadian and US imperialism. In other words Canada's military is no longer just a reserve or junior partner but a spearhead and pioneer of imperialism. In particular MacKay cited Haiti, where the Canadian military helped overthrow the elected government, as well as Libya, where NATO is intervening in a civil war and destroying the sovereignty of an African country and by its own admission killing civilians, perversely

in the name of a "Responsibility to Protect" civilians.

The Canadian government will not tell us, its own citizens, the content of these agreements or exactly how many or which countries it is negotiating with. The only way the Canadian people learned of a recent secret military base, Camp Mirage in the United Arab Emirates, was when it was exposed as a consequence of the Canadian government excluding Arab airlines from Canadian destinations in favor of Canadian business. These secret and undemocratic basing arrangements go hand in hand with Prime Minister Stephen Harper's further subordination of Canada to Canadian corporate and US imperialism's

interests, which mean even more wars and deaths the Canadian people are overwhelmingly opposed to as in Afghanistan.

A broad peace movement mobilizing all Canadians who oppose the never-ending agenda of wars and violations of sovereignty can stop and reverse these basing agreements and Canada's accelerating imperialism.

Canadian Peace Congress

Canadian Peace Congress Warns of F-35 Dangers

Fighter Jet Program Also Used For NATO's Nuclear Weapons Development

Dave McKee

President, Canadian Peace Congress

Opposition in Canada to the government's proposal to purchase 65 F-35 fighter jets has been consistent and growing. Most of it is focused on the related issues of costs and corruption that are associated with the procurement. This is critically important — military spending should always be conducted in an open and transparent manner, and it must be justified in the context of broader public spending. In an era of high unemployment, deep cuts to social programs and harsh austerity programs that target working people, Harper's intention of spending billions of dollars on fighter jets is thoroughly offensive, and it needs to be confronted and opposed by the largest possible mobilization of people.

The F-35 program is driven by the United States military and its NATO allies. In 1997, Canada signed onto the Joint Strike Fighter program, which was developed as

a vehicle for the United States to capture international funding for a replacement jet fighter. Canada's initial investment in 1997 was \$10 million. In 2001 the JSF contract was awarded to Lockheed Martin, who developed what is now known as the F-35. By 2010, the international procurement process was underway and the Conservative government of Stephen Harper announced that Canada would purchase 65 fighter jets, through an untendered purchase.

Prior to this announcement by the Harper government, the issue of the F-35 had been discussed at NATO's Parliamentary Assembly (PA), a body that provides an ongoing political exchange between NATO and legislators from its member states. The PA is explicitly oriented toward government policy, working to ensure that legislation and programs of member states are consistent with, and facilitate the implementation of, NATO's priorities. The reports from PA meetings in 2010 suggest some concern that international orders for the F-35 and, by extension, funding for the project, were below expectation. This is

significant, as the United States has been trying, since the economic crisis of 2008, to reduce its financial support to NATO and to offset that by increasing financial support from other members. Harper's purchase announcement is yet another obedient response to NATO and US prodding, this time guaranteed through an undemocratic process.

There is, however, another aspect to the F-35 program that has not received much public attention, and this is its link with renewed nuclear weapons development. This connection emerged around the same time as Harper's announcement of the Canadian purchase. In early 2010 the US government, as part of its Nuclear Posture Review, announced that the F-35 program would involve redesigning the B61 bomb. The B61 is a nuclear bomb. While the F-35 was not initially intended to be nuclear capable, the US announcement clearly indicates that F-35 jet will carry and deliver this nuclear weapon. The rollout of the F-35 is planned to coincide with the rollout of the redesigned B61 nuclear bomb. Through

the F-35 program, NATO will have secured both an updated nuclear weapon and an multinational delivery system.

There has been no statement from the Canadian government opposing the use of the F-35 program to develop the B61 nuclear bomb. Nor has there been any indication that F-35's coveted by Harper and Canada's military will be exempt from carrying nuclear weaponry.

Most people in Canada understand that this country is a non-nuclear weapons state. Public opinion overwhelmingly (almost 90%) favours nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, the current reality is that through a non-tendered process, meaning in secret, the Canadian government has committed to purchase 65 military aircraft, and in the process, also fund the upgrade and proliferation of nuclear weaponry.

This one more reason to scrap the proposed purchase of the F-35, and it points to the urgent need to re-orient Canada's foreign policy to one that is based on peace, sovereignty and international solidarity. ■

Syria: The Unfolding Spectre ... (from p. 1)

alliance into top-gear in respect of the U.S. hegemonic designs for the Middle East in the post so-called 'Arab Spring' situation. The Houla massacre is to be brought before a rare gathering of the UN Human Rights Council. The meeting was called by 21 of the 47 council members. The request was officially submitted, not surprisingly, by Qatar, Turkey, the US, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Denmark and the EU.

Meanwhile, Syria's Ambassador to the UN, Bashar Ja'afari, has been reported as saying that the massacre in the town of Houla was carried out by "professional terrorists" who were seeking to ignite a sectarian conflict in the country. "Many Syrian innocents got killed because of this misbehaviour of these outsiders. The Syrian people need one clear-cut message that the international community, if there is an international community, is there to help settling the conflict in Syria," he said referring to the Houla massacre and on-going violence.

Underlying the extent of external involvement in the Syrian conflict, Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, is quoted in the British *Daily Telegraph* of 18th November 2011, to have said:

"It is not a secret that along with peaceful demonstrators, there is more and more participation from groups of armed people who have an entirely different agenda from reform and democracy in Syria."

"Their agenda concerns ethnic cleansing and tribal interests and these people

have received and are continuing to receive weapons in growing amounts from neighbouring countries and they don't particularly hide it. Weapons are being smuggled in through Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, Jordan and if the opposition uses such methods, this will lead to a full scale civil war."

It is also out of frustration that the U.S.- and NATO-led aggressive military alliance seeks to circumvent the UN process and go it alone, because until now, Russia and the Peoples' Republic of China have thwarted their efforts in the Security Council when they used their veto powers against a Security Council resolution which would have paved the way for military aggression against Syria earlier.

Blogger Rick Rozoff believes that the U.S. has warned Russia and China that it will push forward military action no matter what. "Ambassador Rice is basically telling Russia and China and other members of the Security Council that if they do not go along with Western plans for more stringent sanctions and other actions against Syria, the U.S. and its NATO allies reserve a right to act outside the Security Council as they did with Yugoslavia 13 years ago and launch military actions against Syria," Rozoff told RT.

Belgian investigative journalist Michel Collon's praxis for understanding the imperialist 'war propaganda', as outlined in the framework of the 'five principles driving war propaganda', is very illustrative, and is as follows:

1. Obscure one's economic interests;

2. Appear humanitarian in work and motivations;

3. Obscure history;

4. Demonize the enemy; and

5. Monopolize the flow of information

These principles have been at work in the imperialists' war propaganda in different mix in the recent period. These (different mix) have formed an important part of comprehending the significant role of major mainstream media such as CNN in Afghanistan and Iraq wars, Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya in the Libyan aggression, assisted in varying degrees by France24, BCC, Reuter, AFP *et al.*

The bloc of aggressive countries threatening others, such as the U.S., Britain, alongside France, and now petro-gas Saudi peninsula monarchies Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey have joined the coterie. Thus the Arab League has become as instrument through which these monarchies are seeking to prevail in this crisis. For its efforts, Qatar has been rewarded with the presidency of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, since the 14th of September 2011.

It is against this backdrop that we can fully comprehend the principal role of the media then and now—from Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and now unravelling in Syria and Iran. The principal role of the media in this context and for the battle of ideas has increasingly become an important terrain of engagement globally, as alternative sources and outlets flourish, and assisted by the internet, blogs and other social media. For imperialism, the terrain is also important to

win support at the home-front so that the population is coaxed and won-over unto the side of the government around the notion of humanitarianism as a pretext. The popular uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East came as a surprise to the West only because the situation in Egypt, Tunisia, and the Gulf States had not been adequately reported, analyzed, and discussed from the perspective of democratic practice and social justice, as a result of the West's backing of dodgy and highly unpopular and dictatorial leaders, such as Hosni Mubarak and Ben Ali...

The mainstream media falsify Syria's death toll and its culprits. Marinella Corregia—an Italian journalist and anti-war peace activist—says that there are many facts that cast doubt on the claims that the Syrian government forces were behind the Houla massacre. She asserts that, first of all, the victims in the various online media of the massacre appear to have been killed at close range and not as a result of artillery strikes.

"The children don't seem to be the victims of shelling or artillery, but of direct killing from a short distance," she told Russia Television (RT).

"Therefore it doesn't seem possible to make a connection between the accusations by the opposition that the army attacked Houla with heavy weapons and the way the children were murdered."

Secondly, Corregia points to the fact that some of the online media actually provide erroneous information.

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WORLD PEACE

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CPPC (Portugal) Report and Contribution to the WPC European Region Meeting — Larnaka, Cyprus, 7th April 2012

INTRODUCTION

The capitalist system, bogged into a serious crisis, finds in the increase of exploitation, in oppression and in war, the only answer to the dead end it is in.

The pact establishing the principles that should govern the relations among states – resulting from World War II and embodied in the United Nations Charter – is threatened by the recurrent subversion of international law and the instrumentalization of the UN, through which the US and its allies try to disguise its policy of war.

Imperialism furthers its aggressiveness, accompanying it with a systematic and orchestrated ideological and misinformation campaign that seeks to “legitimate” and “whitewash” the barbarity of war – death, suffering and destruction – through the so-called “preventive war”, the so-called “right of interference” or the so-named “war on terror.”

At the same time, it boosts the arms race, the arms industry and military spending. The investment on research to produce new and more sinister weapons – including nuclear weapons, drones and the so-called non-lethal weapons, these intended mainly for internal repression – consume astronomical budgets.

In view of the neoliberal globalization and imperialism’s offensive, there is a growth in hunger, extreme poverty and disease, so often they themselves efficient instruments of war. Fundamental rights won by the workers and the peoples after decades of struggle for social and national emancipation are questioned. The planet is burdened with a destructive system of production, incompatible with the indispensable sustainable relationship between human communities and nature.

However, as the global situation has shown in the last two years, it is in this adverse context that we are witnessing an admirable resistance and struggle by peoples against oppression and exploitation, against injustice and fetters, for freedom and peace, in an unequivocal proof that the future of the world will be what humanity determines.

THE SHARPENING OF CAPITALISM’S CRISIS — INCREASED THREAT TO PEACE

The past three years have confirmed the trend towards the sharpening of the crisis of the capitalist system, whose dimension and depth prove its structural and systemic dimension, beyond the mere cyclical character of the crises that are at its root, tending to become chronic and confirming the system’s incapacity to deal with its contradictions.

Given the consequences of the increasing appropriation, accumulation and private concentration of wealth, of the financialization of the economy and financial speculation – which have created an unsustainable situation for much of the international financial system – there is an ongoing process of a colossal transfer of debts and losses from the banks to the state budgets, from private to public.

In the European Union, the so-called “aid packages”, said to “combat the crisis”, that the EU, ECB and IMF imposed on Ireland, Greece and Portugal, and now also on Italy, represent the strengthening of mechanisms of transfer of the created wealth to the banks, the control of important sectors of the economy by private interests, the intensification of

exploitation of those who make their living through work and jeopardize social advances which, if materialized, will mean a brutal degradation of the living conditions of the vast majority of the population and a widespread and violent worsening of social inequalities and injustice,

In the framework of the crisis – where we witness rivalries and contradictions between major powers and the relative economic decline of the US and the emergence of new economic powers in the world – the attempts to impose a “new world order”, hegemonized by the US and other major powers, lead to a growing instability and insecurity, with great danger to peace, freedom, democracy, sovereignty, independence and social



progress all over the world.

The capitalist system in crisis, destructive, exploitative and bellicist, threatens to launch the globe into a tragedy of huge proportions. Imperialism’s bellicist drift, which launches into an assault on the planet attempting to turn back the victorious struggles of social and national emancipation that characterized the 20th century, continues, grows and becomes more aggressive.

Consecutive wars of interference, aggression and occupation in the Balkans, Middle East, Central Asia and Africa continue – including NATO’s genocidal aggression against Libya – with repeated serious threats of new military aggressions that include the Korean Peninsula, as well as Africa and even Latin America, and presently assuming particular seriousness and risk of an armed intervention in Syria and the economic and media war on Iran.

Wars and threats of new aggressions that are accompanied by complete disregard for the principles of the United Nations Charter, the blatant subversion of international law and the instrumentalization of the UN, whose only aim is to destroy the emancipation and resistance of the peoples, the destruction of the processes of national economic development, the plunder of national, economic and financial resources, and the domination of the markets or regions of geostrategic importance, in a process of attempting to re-colonise the globe.

There is no shortage of money when it comes to interference and war. The giddy arms race continues, led by the US which, at a time when it faces the most serious economic and social crisis, sets new records in increasing its military budget, with the 2011 budget (700 thousand million dollars) the highest ever in its history and amounting to about half the military

spending in the world. It should be noted that the military budget of the NATO countries and Japan, South Korea and Australia (its allies) together represent 72% of the military spending in the world. The current worldwide military spending is estimated at around 1600 thousand million dollars (2010 figures), representing a 50% increase compared to the recorded military spending in 2001 and around 2.6% of the world gross domestic product (SIPRI 2010 Yearbook).

In Europe, while national budgets are used to finance NATO’s military aggressions against other peoples – without any connection to national interests – sacrifices are imposed on those men and women who live out of their work, pensioners,

War (1990-91) and the 12-year intermittency of inhuman embargo, the Second Gulf War, extended by 8 years of brutal occupation (2003-2011), the last “withdrawal” meant the permanence of yet 50 000 soldiers.

In North Africa and the Middle East, following the popular uprisings in several Arab countries since the beginning of 2011, as was the case of Tunisia and Egypt, were are witnessing an attempt to recover the initiative by those who have been always responsible and conniving with the oppression and exploitation of these peoples and their wealth. In Bahrain – where there is an important US military base – the popular uprising was violently crushed with the support of invading military forces from Saudi Arabia. Libya was the target of a brutal aggression by NATO.

In Palestine continues the struggle against colonisation, building of settlements, oppression of the Palestinian people and occupation of their territories by Israel which – besides being the only nuclear power in the region, has the support and complicity of the US in its crimes – is increasingly more isolated in face of its genocidal policy and disrespect for the rights of the Palestinian people.

Israel which maintains a policy of aggression against other states in the region continues to illegally occupy the Golan Heights, in Syria, the Sheba Farms, in Lebanon, in addition to the increasing threats against Iran.

In the Korean Peninsula, where for six decades the US has kept a strong military presence, they stimulate the worsening of tension, by not complying with the established agreements, by holding military manoeuvres and threats of aggression against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, using as argument its nuclear programme.

In Africa and Latin America, with its two commands for this continent and sub-continent – respectively AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM –, the US strengthens its instruments of direct or indirect military intervention (camouflaged by the so-called «development assistance»). In fact, this takes place openly in Africa, where military interventions by the US and other European NATO powers multiply, with or without UN cover, as in the Ivory Coast.

War, economic inequality and development in the “third world” are inextricably linked to the systematic degradation of the planet and the living conditions of most of the peoples of the world. The capitalist system, due to its need of constant accumulation, deepens the exploitation of natural resources well beyond the threshold of the Earth’s sustainability. Seeking, if necessary, by means of war, the geopolitical domination of the territories richest in resources. Because Nature is not a reality foreign to the condition of human society, the struggle for access to the natural resources and ecological balance is inseparable from the struggle against imperialism, also responsible for the unbridled and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.

NATO: THE MOST SERIOUS AND SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO SECURITY AND PEACE IN THE WORLD

NATO – in its summit held in Lisbon, on November 19 and 20, 2010 – adopted a strategic concept that aims nothing but

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Regional Report on the Middle East Larnaca, Cyprus — April 6, 2012

Dr. Akel Taqz

Coordinator of Middle East, Palestinian Committee for Peace and Solidarity

Dear comrades and friends,

First I would like on behalf the member organizations of the WPC from the Middle East to thank our comrades in the Cyprus Peace Council for hosting our regional meeting. Also we would like to thank our comrades in the head office for helping in our preparations for this meeting.

We also welcome our friends from European region for attending our meeting, hoping that their contribution will help us to discuss the current situation in the world in general, and the Middle East and Europe in particular, in this important moment, and to exchange views and opinions.

Dear Comrades,

The fact that we couldn't hold our regional meeting in the region as we did in the last Regional meeting reflects the reality and difficult situation in the region, where despite the ongoing events and changes, the Middle East is still so far from democracy, political and individual freedoms.

From our last meeting in China last November until now and despite the hope that ME is moving forward, situation is continuing to be difficult and complicated, and very dangerous. The so-called Arab spring is not going well and not bringing the change we hoped, capitalists and imperialists and their alienated forces in the region are doing their best to control and to give the direction to the changes to serve their interest, unfortunately the succeeded in a big part of these planes.

Our Comrades from respected countries of course will give us more details and clear picture about the situation in their countries especially in Egypt, Syria, Iran, but also in Jordan, Lebanon, and I will report with more details about the situation in Palestine. But we can say that ME is not isolated and is a part of the general crises, first economical and as a result political, with various disturbances.

The most important change in the middle east is the role of Islamic forces in the political life of the region, where we believe that these forces especially Muslim brotherhood achieved an agreement with the main forces in the region and outside for the regulation of this role.

As we noticed the situation in Tunisia was solved mainly peacefully with the Islamic forces to have the power in the parliament and in the post of the president. May we can say the same thing about Egypt, Islamic forces also won the general elections and the have a good chance for presidential, with some kind of cooperation with the army and security forces in the country, at least the next president will be a result of common agreement between these forces and the army. Also it will not be strange to see the elements of the old regime to play significant role in the future of Egypt, while the progressive, democratic forces are under a big pressure. Our comrades and friends in the peace movement of Egypt will give us a better description of situation. Military occupation of Bahrain by gulf forces did not solve the problem, in contrary, it added a new elements of the crisis. In Yemen, despite the agreement and a new-old President, there are no in-

dications that the problem will end soon. Libya is an example how these forces can deal with countries for their interest, they are ready to destroy the country and to kill thousands of people for oil. Libya is entering a new era where a civil war and the division of the country is more than reality, in the same time imperialist forces and their allies achieved their goal to control the sources of energy in this country not minding about the future of the people of Libya. In Jordan, with some deference's the situation is not stable, and will be reported by our comrade from the Jordanian Peace Council.

The most difficult, complicated and sensitive situation is the one which is going on in Syria.

We hope that our friend from Syria as a representative of the Syrian Peace Council, secretariat member will give us a picture and opinion about the situation.

We are sure that there are demands and needs of Syrian people for democracy, freedom, social justice and reforms, which we as peace loving, progressive and democratic people and forces absolutely support and we are in solidarity with the Syrian people. The other certain thing in the case of Syria is that there is a foreign intervention in the events in Syria from many outsiders who are trying to repeat the case of Libya. There are weapons, money and extreme elements beside the economic and political pressure. There is also a kind of connection between the situation in Syria and the plans against Iran where the coalition of NATO, USA, Europe, Israel, Turkey and some Arab countries are engaged. They use the issue of the nuclear program of Iran to justify further pressure and economic sanctions on Iran.

The aim is to coerce the Iranian regime to accept the American arrangements.

The latest efforts of USA to prepare the public opinion inside and outside for a new military intervention in the region accusing Iran of a plan to assassinate the ambassador of SA in Washington is also a part of the American arrangements for the Middle East.

The peace movement in Israel also is doing its best in very difficult conditions where the Israeli political parties and public opinion are moving to the extreme right.

Palestine despite all these events in the region, remains of big importance for the peoples of the region and also for the peoples of the world.

20 years of negotiations between Israel and PLO, the so called peace process came to its end without any result and with Israel to use these talks for changing the situation on the ground and making new facts which made the possibility of any solution especially the two states solution equal to zero. Building settlements, creating the separation wall, demolishing houses, especially in east Jerusalem, keeping thousands of Palestinians in Israeli prisons, rejecting all the resolutions of the UN that are related to the Palestinian problem, focusing only on the matter of security and seeking to prolong the occupation as much as possible with fully support of USA and their alliance, all these fact pushed the Palestinian leadership to transfer the whole Palestinian issue to the UN, first to the security council and then to the general assembly, demanding the admission of the Palestinian state as a full member in the UN and asking

the international community to take its responsibility and to implement the UN resolutions and international law.

The situation in the UN as you know is not easy. The USA with Israel and their allies are trying with all means to stop this process and they exercise pressure on the member countries of SC to prevent the discussion and negating the issue. The USA is threatening to use the VETO and to cancel the economical aid not only to the Palestinian Authority, but to all international institutions that recognize or admit Palestine and pushing other countries to do the same.

We think that the entire world understood that peace and occupation cannot exist together. Certain conditions should be preserved in order to keep a just peace permanently. These conditions mean ending the occupation of the Palestinian territories, Lebanese Sheba farms and Syrian heights of Golan, the recognition of an independent Palestinian state within the borders of June 4th 1967 with east

Jerusalem as its capital, solving the issue of the Palestinian refugees according to the Resolution 194, releasing Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons, and ending the unjust siege on Gaza. Settlements and negotiations also cannot go together. Israel must stop building settlements and changing the facts on the ground. Only then the region will live in peace and the peoples will develop their countries and struggle against poverty and for better future.

We do believe that the Palestinian people and the peoples of the region in general still need your solidarity and support, with this occasion I would like to thank all comrades and organizations of WPC and WFDY for there solidarity mission to Palestine last month in a very critical and important moment. It was a solidarity mission in practice.

Once again I would like to thank you all with the hope to see a delegation of WPC holding meetings in free Palestine. ■

The Time of the Peoples

What humanity is experiencing today and in what global society do we live? Today's society is characterized by the exploitation of surplus labor of billions, for the appropriation of Profit Production for the few. The increasing accumulation and centralization of wealth naturally led to the current economic crisis, with tragic consequences especially for the workers all over the world. A crisis that is indisputably a systemic one.

Today's globalized society is characterized by severe discrimination against immigrants, growing nationalism - chauvinism and "euro-centricism." There is also an unprecedented brutal attack on the right to health care and of course on the right to education, through the reduction of General Education and intense commercialization. At the same time drug use is rapidly increasing even among children who are at the pre-pubertal stage.

Another feature of today's society is the complete removal of the social function of science, through strict control and direction based on the interests of capital and imperialist organizations like NATO.

At the same time, the environment is, directly or indirectly, destroyed not only by their expansionist wars, but also by business planning and action, so that the ecosystem as we knew it is threatened as ever before.

They try to preserve this so called democratic global society and perpetuate the ravens of NATO, EU, IMF, banking behemoths, WTO and other imperialist agencies. The preservation of such a society is undermining peace. Peace does not mean simply that there are no wars, but it means having the right to some food on the plate, a bottle of milk, clean water, basic education and health. Peace means to maintain an environment that preserves human existence and not an environment that applies qualitative and quantitative limits to the human life!

Within this framework, there arises the need of the peoples to struggle, since they are the target of the imperialist oligarchy, while at the same time there comes also the time to respond and fight back. In order to give a powerful answer, the struggle needs both to be massive and well organized and targeted.

An important and crucial role in the anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples plays the World Peace Council. The WPC has a heroic past and a rich history that forms the basis for future struggles. The WPC, at this stage of the titanic struggle, continues with anti-imperialist rallies, demonstrations, collecting signatures, submitting of international resolutions, international conferences and other events. In this struggle, special importance is given to the fraternal relationship and closed cooperation of WPC with the global class orientated Worker's movement, the World Federation of Progressive Women and the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

During this period WPC is marching toward the next Regular Congress to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal, this coming July. We deem this WPC Assembly as a crucial crossroad for the development of the global anti-imperialist movement and the effectiveness of our struggle. The Cyprus Peace Council believes that through this whole Assembly process the struggle of peoples for peace and life, against imperialism is strengthened.

It is not enough at all to say yes to peace, we need to fight intensively against Imperialism - the enemy of Peace. We cannot stop them unless we come into direct conflict with them and we cannot win unless we manage to subvert them.

Those who speak of compromise and compliance, those who claim that the victory of the peoples is a utopia, do not only lack knowledge of history, but, directly or indirectly, call people to submission.

Long live WPC

Long live the anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples!

Christos Kourtellaris
General Secretary, Cyprus Peace Council

Speech by Thanassis Pafilis, General Secretary of the WPC At the Middle East Regional Meeting, Larnaca/Cyprus — April 6, 2012

We believe that the anti-imperialist peace forces, the forces which struggle within the framework of the WPC have a serious obligation to study, analyze the developments in international relations and also inform the peoples providing them with the best possible tools in the struggle against the exploitative system and imperialism thus assisting the intervention and the struggles of the workers.

From this point of view, the developments in the region of Middle East, Northern Africa, Persian Gulf, Eastern Mediterranean have their own importance as we are in a crucial period when a very dangerous situation is being created in the wider region that might possibly lead to general military conflicts, a period when imperialist aggressiveness is being strengthened and the inter-imperialist rivalries are being intensified following the previous imperialist wars that we experienced in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

We are in a deep synchronized capitalist crisis of over-accumulated capital which seeks ways to be utilized and is characterized by the growing aggressiveness of imperialism and the sharpening of its contradictions. These inter-imperialist contradictions lead to the plan which is in progress and promotes an imperialist intervention in Syria, which apart from the destabilization and overthrow of the government, aims at the creation of conditions to attack Iran, under the pretext of its nuclear program. At the same time, Turkey's threats against Cyprus are intensifying, the relations between Turkey and Israel are sharpening and Israel's aggressiveness against the Palestinian people, Lebanon and Egypt is being reinforced.

The competition over the distribution of the loot has succeeded the war in Libya and plans are being promoted for the division of the country with the semi-autonomy of the so-called Cyrenaica region in order to distribute the imperialist loot. Behind these plans an unrelenting war for control in this rich in energy deposits country is being concealed. Besides, we should not forget that the Cyrenaica which has the richest deposits in Libya and that the imperialist invasion last February began from there and the regional capital Benghazi. Another unjust imperialist war which took place for the control of oil and gas deposits in the region unleashed by NATO and the EU, with the support of the Greek government which once again made military bases and Greek territory available for the imperialist plans.

At the same time in the conditions of the deep synchronized capitalist crisis the working class and popular strata experience the full-scale offensive of capital's forces which use every tool in order to transfer the burdens of the crisis onto the workers.

The crisis of capitalism and the recession of the economy in the EU and other capitalist countries have led to an unprecedented increase of unemployment, to the reduction of salaries, pensions and social spending leading to the expansion of absolute destitution and poverty.

Thus, we consider necessary to stress that there is a need for coordinated struggle against imperialist aggressiveness and the attack of capital against labour and people's rights, a struggle that will bring to the agenda the abolition of the causes that breed exploitation, crisis and wars.

Allow us to pose several basic issues concerning the developments the wider

region of Northern Africa, the Persian Gulf, the Balkans, South Eastern Mediterranean and the Caspian Sea. These regions are of great strategic importance since they have vast oil and gas reserves and include important energy and key maritime channels.

This region is already being exploited by major monopoly and economic groups of powerful imperialist and regional states that compete for the control and the exploitation of the energy wealth. There is an intense race among the USA, France, Great Britain, Germany, Turkey, Israel, Russia and China, which over the last years compete with each other with vari-



ous activities in the region. We can deploy a great deal of evidence to substantiate that imperialism as a system is hostile to the peoples and no prettification of a capitalist country, imperialist centre or alliance is justified in the name of the so-called multi-polar world. Because such a choice leads to the deception of the peoples and their entrapment by the one or the other imperialist centre or force.

In the conditions of imperialism which is the highest monopoly stage of capitalism, the aggressive expansion of the monopolies and the internationalization of capital is a characteristic element.

The capitalist states participate according to their level of development. On the basis of their economic, political and military strength they retain a certain position in the imperialist pyramid and fight for a better one for the sake of their monopolies. This is a process of competition, balance, creation of axes and anti-axes and realignments resulting from changes in the balance of forces.

No bourgeois class, no political force which serves the interests of the capitalists is innocent. The alliances, permanent or temporary, the switching over to other alliances, the accession into imperialist organizations, such as NATO, the European Union or other regional alliances aim to serve the interests of the bourgeois class more efficiently.

We can say that the capitalist states determine their position in the international relations and alliances with as a criterion the promotion of the interests of the bourgeois class and they participate in this process according to their strength. Of course in order for the more general interests of the ruling class to be served they do not hesitate to cede sovereign rights e.g. to an interstate imperialist

union, such as the EU or to an interstate imperialist organization such as NATO.

Imperialist aggressiveness is a basic characteristic of the system. The monopolies cannot be restricted to national boundaries. The hunt for profits leads to the internationalization of capital, to the quest for and the conquest of new markets, for the control of natural resources. This tendency leads to interventions and wars.

We would like to table at today's meeting certain positions which are related to the developments in the wider region:

The Intervention of the USA, the EU, Turkey and a series of Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, in the interna-

strengthen the anti-imperialist struggle.

At the same time we note that it is of particular importance the struggle of the Palestinian people for an independent democratic state, with its own borders and East Jerusalem as its capital, next to Israel is intensified and continues to be a top priority for the international anti-imperialist movement! The stance of the USA, Israel and the EU has been condemned in the consciousness of the peace loving people. The plans for a "single state", for the continuation of the settlements, the unacceptable separation wall, the butchering of the Palestinian people, the imprisonments must meet the most unequivocal condemnation. We demand the immediate recognition of the Palestinian state in the borders of 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The previous period was marked by the major mobilizations in Northern Africa. It is indisputable that in these countries and particularly in Egypt and Tunisia working class and popular struggles developed, a large section of the people rose up, particularly the middle strata and the youth against poverty, unemployment, corruption, oppression which had been imposed by the regimes of Mubarak and Ben Ali whose parties participated in the Socialist International, which has as its president the former Greek Prime Minister G. Papandreou.

The support for the people's struggle does not impede us from interpreting the developments as a result of the combination of internal and external factors, with the internal factors being the most significant. Sections of the bourgeois class have participated and still participate in the process of changes in order to modernize the economic basis, to liberate branches and sectors of the economy that are still under the control of the state as well as to adapt the political system to a bourgeois parliamentary model so that it corresponds to the development of the capitalist economy.

This assessment does not underestimate the role of the USA, which has linked its interests to the region and acts in the framework of acute inter-imperialist competition on the basis of the plan for a "New, Greater Middle East" in order to strengthen its position, in order to promote the process of bourgeois modernization, devising transitional political solutions, which do not exclude the so called "political Islam" as in the case of Turkey.

We do not accept the term revolution, since it is a deeper concept referring to a change of the social class in power.

The anti-imperialist movement should take a critical stance towards terms like "the Arab spring." In our opinion, this position has been confirmed by life and developments, namely by the anti-people orientation of the policy of the Tunisian and Egyptian military government as well as the leading role of forces that try to confine the developments to political-religious solutions that do not serve the interest of the people. We do not support every political change uncritically. We examine the role of the social classes, of the political forces and movements and take into consideration the content of the political positions.

We should assess the essence of the changes, whether they serve the popular interests. On this basis we oppose positions that support e.g. the so called anti-regime forces in Libya that came to power by means of the imperialist bombings and have reactionary positions. Furthermore,

continued on page 8

CPPC (Portugal) Report ... (from p. 3

the strengthening of this political and military bloc as a tool of interference and aggression at the global level. It is a new qualitative leap which represents the most serious and significant threat to security and peace worldwide, as the reality is showing.

With this NATO Summit – and in view of the growing crisis it faces – the US has reached an agreement (not free from contradictions) with its allies for the creation of an escalation of conflict that only seeks to ensure the control of the exploitation of resources and markets, that they eagerly need, by using threats and military force if necessary, as shown in NATO's aggression against Libya and in again feeding all the sources of tension and threats of escalation of conflicts and aggression, namely against Syria and Iran.

With its renewed strategic concept, NATO calls upon itself the right to interfere and intervene anywhere in the world, using any excuse, putting forward the formulation called "new threats" tailored to its real purposes, in an attempt to justify its existence and criminal action. NATO creates and will create situations that later on – with an intentional manipulated public opinion using misinformation campaigns – it will use to "justify" its aggression.

In this framework, it re-launches the arms race and increase in military spending, the installation of foreign military bases, the transformation of national armed forces into expeditionary forces at NATO's service, the militarisation of international relations and war.

NATO reaffirms the maintenance and use of nuclear weapons in its strategic doctrine, insisting on the maintenance of the installation of US nuclear weapons in the territory of other NATO-member countries.

NATO assumes its project of installing new missile systems of an offensive nature in Europe, as a US "anti-missile shield" – announcing that one of its key components will be installed in the Base of Rota, in Spain.

NATO reaffirmed its intention to extend its sphere of action with the establishment of the so-called "partnerships" with countries, regional and international organisations (Including UN), with variable, content form and duration, so as to allow its direct presence and action or placing others to materialize its strategy of domination. In this way, NATO would play, according to its needs or possibilities, the role of director or main actor or director of other actors.

For this, NATO's goal is the instrumentalization of the UN to "whitewash" its illegal action, and when not obtaining this, it does not reject complete disregard for the United Nations Charter and international law. In short, the NATO Summit was a declaration of war on the peoples of the world.

In this framework, the European Union reaffirms itself as the European pillar of NATO and its strategic partner, emphasizing the content and meaning of the Lisbon Treaty for the effective materialization of this bellicist strategy -. In fact outlining that this militarist dimension combines with the federalist and neoliberal dimensions of the European Union.

The last NATO summit in Lisbon once again brought into the open that, despite the existence of increasing contradictions among the powers of the European Union and the US, their relation in the military field has been guided by a strategic concept, in a context of a subordination of the first to the hegemonic logic of the latter.

The European Union has been supporting and joining, in an increasingly ostensive manner, the militarist and interventionist drift of the US and NATO, participating, assisting, and even replacing NATO in its aggressions and occupations of sovereign countries.

its active action in defence of: opposition to NATO and its bellicist goals; the withdrawal of Portuguese forces involved in NATO's military missions, the end of foreign military bases and NATO installations on national territory; the dissolution of NATO, disarmament and end of nuclear and mass destruction weapons, and demand respect and observance of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic and the determinations of the United Nations Charter, of international law and sovereignty and equality of the peoples.

The next NATO summit, in Chi-

action to promote our common goals: general and controlled disarmament; peaceful coexistence among nations; balanced development taking into account the well-being of Humanity; respect for Human Rights and fundamental freedoms, the end of all types of discrimination and fascism, respect for the right of the peoples to sovereignty and independence and international cooperation.

To this effect, we propose the following main lines of intervention:

- The struggle against war and militarism (against political and military blocs, like NATO, against the militarization of the European Union, against foreign military bases, an end to the arms race, for a world free from nuclear weapons, for the rejection of the participation of soldiers or militarized forces from our countries in aggressions against other peoples and for an independent foreign policy).

- The solidarity and cooperation with all the peoples of the world, in particular with the peoples victims of imperialist wars (solidarity with the resistance against aggression and occupation, against foreign interference, blackmail, blockades or threats of military intervention, supporting the struggle of the peoples in their inalienable right to self-determination, sovereignty, freedom and independence of their respective countries).

The struggle for peace is an integral part and necessary condition for justice and social progress.

We believe that the struggle for peace is a decisive contribution and insurmountable milestone to overcome the economic and financial crisis and build a world of justice and social progress, based on the democratization of the economic relations and the development of a sustainable relation between the human communities and nature, respecting the rights and aspirations of all the peoples of the world.

The aspirations and right of the peoples to peace embody the achievement and materialization of the rights to well-being, food, water, healthcare, housing, education, work, culture, leisure and recreation, healthy environment

and a balanced relationship with nature, freedom, sovereignty, justice, economic development, to have the necessary material conditions for a dignified and stable life.

To achieve these main lines of intervention, we appeal for a strengthening of the peace movement in Europe and the World, and the congregation of efforts within the World Peace Council, sharing ideas and proposals, coordinating actions, assuming collective responsibilities, contributing according to the possibilities and responsibilities for the strengthening of the peace movement at the international level.

With conviction in the correctness of our ideals and principles, and confidence in the construction of a better future, we propose that we reaffirm our ever present common commitment to always act, at the national and international level, side by side with all men and women who resist and intervene with the aspiration and conviction that it is possible to build a fair, democratic, solidary and peaceful world. ■

World Peace Council
let's strengthen the peoples' struggle for peace

against imperialist wars and exploitation

WORLD PEACE ASSEMBLY & CONFERENCE

Kathmandu, Nepal
July 20-23, 2012

Nepal Peace & Solidarity Council (NPSC)

www.wpc-in.org
www.npscnepal.org

And this takes place without consulting the European people, and sometimes not even informing them, about the content of the negotiations, the commitments and serious consequences.

In illustration of the aggressive course followed by the European Union, we register recent facts that prove the strengthening of the so-called "European security and defence policy," as well as its militarist nature and militarisation – which include the deployment of Anglo-French subversive and war actions in Africa and Middle East, a closer Franco-German axis and the extension of the scope of the Continental and Atlantic military cooperation.

In view of NATO's unacceptable purposes and actions, the Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation (CPPC) has restated and restates, with increasing legitimacy, its commitment to the Campaign "Yes to Peace! No to NATO!" made during NATO summit in Lisbon, 19-20 November 2010, to "continue to strengthen the peace and anti-imperialist movement, persisting in

20-22 May 2012, is an even more urgent occasion to reaffirm the broad convergence of the Peace movement, to denounce and reject the goals and means of this organisation of interference, repression and war worldwide, the armed wing of imperialism with which it tries to impose on the unbending peoples the continuation of the exploitation of the workers, impoverishment and misery.

PEACE, AN EVER PRESENT AND PRESSING CAUSE!

In view of the serious dangers and the great and demanding issues facing humanity, equally high and significant possibilities arise to broaden the resistance and strengthen the forces able to create and lead the construction of a better future.

The peace movement is a part of this broad meeting of wills and combative action, as strong, diversified and determined as its intervention. And so, with renewed commitment, we reaffirm the pledge to strengthen the

Syria: The Unfolding Spectre ... (from p. 2)

“One of the videos on YouTube in Spanish says, ‘Assad bands killed children in Hula’, but in fact shows images of children in houses that the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) and Press TV say were killed by armed groups of the opposition in other villages.”

It is also worth noting that the head of UN observer mission in Syria, General Robert Mood, has not attributed blame in the Houla massacre yet, though the U.S. and its allies are hastily blaming the Assad regime. Ironically, massacres have happened on the eve of every major international event or meeting, such right before the Security Council meeting in February in Homs, during Kofi Anna’s visits and after military defeats of the opposition.

Corregia has been illustrative in pointing out these distortions and falsification by the mainstream media in cases of Libya and now Syria. As a journalist she has written extensively and followed diligently the details entailed in journalist reporting on imperialist wars. She notes that the mainstream media for example, falsified UN words in respect of the death toll in Syria. The UN, she noted, ‘does not possess the truth and speaks only on the basis of ‘credible estimates’; none known by whom... (but many times uses as a source only the Syrian opposition).

Corregia noted on the 27th March 2012 that Reuters itself wrote: “The United Nations estimates more than 9,000 people have been killed in Syria’s upheaval over the past year, UN Middle East envoy Robert Serry told the Security Council Syrian authorities blame foreign-backed terrorists for the violence and say 3,000 soldiers and police have been killed.” Also AP wrote: “Just two weeks ago, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon raised the toll in Syria to well over 8,000. Meanwhile, in a Security Council briefing Tuesday, UN Middle East coordinator Robert Serry said violence in Syria continued unabated and that credible estimates now put the total number of deaths from the crisis well above 9,000.”

Corregia continues: ‘as we can see, the UN envoy gave the huge, unverified number, without specifying who killed whom’. But see how few days later Reuters deformed the things: “The United Nations says Assad’s forces have killed more than 9,000 people in the conflict which began with peaceful protests, although armed rebels later began fighting back.”

So, the total death toll is put on Assad shoulders only. Again on April 20th, Reuters keeps repeating the same. Reuters gives very few words also to the Syrian government figures: “Syria told the world body this week that 6,044 had died, including 2,566 soldiers and police.” Note: Reuters, and all other mainstream media,

(1) do not specify whom the Syrian government blames for that (in this way, it could appear to the readers that for the non-military death, Syrian governments agrees it is responsible!); (2) the total figure given is 6,044....

Bashar Ja’afari, permanent representative of Syria to the UN, wrote a letter to UN Security Council President, copied Ban Ki Moon and mentioned in the text details and figures....:

“Excellency, I have the honour to transmit herewith a detailed table on the losses incurred in the Syrian Arab Republic due to the acts committed by armed terrorist groups. The table covers the period from the beginning of the events in Syria until 15 March 2012 and it contains the following information: Death toll of civilians: 3211 people. Death toll of police: 478 people. Death toll of Army and Security Forces: 2088 people (as of

21 March 2012). Death toll of women: 204 people. Death toll of children: 156 people. Death toll of directly assassinated people: 106 people. Resulting in a total of 6143 deaths in the Syrian Arab Republic. Kidnapped civilians, army personnel and police officers: 1560 people, including 931 missing people.”

In the overall propaganda, anyway, some “news” surface. The same Reuters quoted Moussa Ahmed, a former producer for Al-Jazeera’s Beirut Bureau, as saying that Al-Jazeera fabricates stories on Syria and that “the facts are totally different with the reports.”

This is the unfolding spectre of the imperialist designs in the Middle East in general, but with Syria and Iran as key targets in an attempt to subdue and bring inline these regimes, as part of a broader part of its geo-strategic interests. In fact what has become apparent in the recent period, like in Libyan situation, is the use of mainstream media to peddle lies and distortions, seeking to portray the current incumbent President Bashar al-Assad as a demon, whilst propping up, arming and generously funding the opposition. This has emboldened the opposition which has become more brazen as their tactics have failed to rally and win over the majority of Syrian people onto their side and support their course of regime change in Syria. This has led more and more to brutal and ending savagery, for which the Houla massacre and others are common place. Ordinary people in Syria have been caught in the crossfire as the authorities and the insurgence battle for supremacy. The majority of the population in Syria, it must be said is in support of reform but not external interference and meddling, which as clearly shown in the Libyan situation could prove to be destructive and reduce the country to heaps of roubles and set the country back many decades. In the region, there is also the thorny matter of the Palestinian issue.

In fact, Vijay Prashad in a recent article (No 1 Sunni fanatic goes to the UN) traces these to the period of the 2003 passing of the harsh Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (SAA). U.S. diplomats then sought to lure Syria to support the ‘U.S. government’s policy of throttling Iran and securing Israel’s place in the region’. Prashad asserts that since 2009 various U.S. diplomats ‘had a role to play in the garrisoning of Syria’. Jeffrey Feltman, who was appointed assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, was a key figure and is now headed for the UN’s Department of Political Affairs.

“Syria was on the road to becoming one of the new pillars of U.S. power in the region. All this fell apart in the Arab Spring, and notably with the Syrian government’s crackdown on protests of 2011 (before a section of the opposition took to the gun, egged on by the Gulf Arabs and the U.S.),” asserts Prashad....

Imperialist Wars

It is important to note the hegemonic imperialist powers such as the U.S., Britain and France all are major nuclear powers. In the Middle East, their ally, Israel is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT) but is the region’s sole nuclear power, which continues to illegally occupy Palestine, parts of Lebanon and Syria.

In fact Israel operates increasingly outside of the ambit of the most elementary principles of international law with impunity. Compare this to the fact that Iran, which is a signatory of the NNPT is subjected to threats of war and sanctions.

The outcomes of the imperialist war on Muammar Gaddafi’s Libya have emboldened them and they are now moving full steam ahead with their geo-strategic designs to unsettle Syria and Iran. Much of the West’s mainstream media have taken issue with the Peoples’ Republic of China and Russia’s veto in the Security Council to be linked to interests of the two nations and questioned their commitment and compliance to humanitarian rights.

That Russia has a contract of weapons with Syria has become a pint of rallying disfavoured with the country and its only concern in Syria. The rhetoric of interests is only applied to others and not the imperialist powers, when so much is clear in the taking of sides in the on-going civil war in Syria. Indeed, the ‘presumption that the campaign by NATO countries and their allies for regime change in Syria, is by contrast rooted in altruistic motives – humanitarianism and belief in democracy – is usually conveyed by implication. It is safer that way, as to openly state that proposition would invite people to consider its absurdity’, argues Junqing of Chinese state news agency Xinhua. “The West purports to promote democracy but its most active allies in the Arab world are unelected royal rulers of Saudi Arabia and Qatar,” argues Junqing.

Off course the crisis of Syria has internal causes which the regime has moved to rectify recently with a set of reforms and elections for the parliament. A combination of factors have also impacted on the political and economic situation in the country, as Syria moves from a planned economy to market capitalism and the negative effects of the on-going sanctions playing a big part in that regard. There are also the fissures of religion and sectarianism which have long been a dimension of the socio-political and economic make-up of modern Syria.

“It is currently expedient for U.S. or European strategist neither to admit promoting a sectarian agenda nor to explain the strategic interests on which Western policy on Syria is based. But fortunately for our understanding, the senior U.S. strategic policy expert Walter Russell Mead wrote an article in April last year, shortly after the NATO air attack on Libya was started, in which he proposed Syria, which he described as a ‘long term annoyance’ for the USA, as the next candidate for a Western military attack”; says Junqing.

A very recent field report by a mother Agnès-Mariam de la Croix from the Christian Eastern Churches, details the ethnic cleansing going on in Homs (where so many Christian families were forced to abandon the city the armed taken

over by the opposition, with snipers and aggressors. The same fate befell the Alawite minorities, Shiite and Sunnis who did not embrace the armed opposition’s ideas. The reports speak for instance of the Al Amoura family, in Al Durdak village near Homs: 41 people were beheaded on the same day. Another family, 14 people, was killed in Hasibiyeh.

President Bashar al-Assad said recently, that Syria is faced with a foreign plot to destroy the country, as he addressed parliament for the first time since May 7 elections, which are part of the package of reforms introduced under the new constitution in Syria:

“The masks have fallen and the international role in the Syrian events is now obvious,” Assad said, adding that the elections were the perfect response “to the criminal killers and those who finance them.”

“What happened in Houla and elsewhere (in Syria) are brutal massacres which even monsters would not have carried out,” Assad said.

President al-Assad observed: “A year and a half after the crisis began, things became clear and the masks were removed... the international role in what is taking place was exposed since decades ... colonialism remains unchanged but its methods and faces are changing and the regional role exposed itself.” He added that “after all the pure blood that was shed, we need a lot of reason and to learn from the people who were able to decode the conspiracy from the beginning.”

Assad has maintained that his country was facing a war waged from outside the country and that terrorism was escalating despite political steps taken towards reforms, including last month’s parliamentary election. “We are not facing a political problem because if we were this party would put forth a political program. What we are facing is (an attempt) to sow sectarian strife and the tool of this is terrorism,” Assad said.

It is clear that the war on Syria is an imperialist war! Progressives the world-over must oppose this war and mobilise the widest possible forces against it. This, in the throes of the Libyan disaster spells devastation for the majority of ordinary people in Syria and the region. Despite the huge media misinformation, based on discredited mainstream media outlets and tired lines, who have taken sides in the debacle, we — peace-loving anti-imperialists — must fight to unravel the lies and distortions and mobilise for genuine world peace and respect for international law and multilateralism. We must also applaud the role and postures adopted by South African government in this regard. ■

WPC Contribution to the USPC ... (from p. 8)

dangers, non military ones, like the climate change, the “cyberspace war”, the energy security, demarcating the whole planet as their vital space of action. This includes Afghanistan, Somalia, the Kossowo, the South China Sea or Australia and New Zealand. It includes the Middle East where plans are in full scale being developed. NATO’s aim is to become “more flexible, more effective and efficient” which means more murderous. The title of the NATO summit in Chicago “Peace and Stability in the Euro Atlantic area” is hypocritical, since NATO is already acting as world police sheriff since many years.

NATO is preparing its new Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) system with unmanned high sophisticated air planes for the surveillance of the Mediterranean Sea, which proves that the preparations for new aggressions are on their way.

Under the title “Smart defence” NATO is trying to unify the military command struc-

ture of the member states, to set common priorities and safe resources and expenses. NATO is demanding from its members to unify infrastructure and share responsibilities in multinational operations. All this goes also under the light of the budgetary problems the governments have during the capitalist economic crisis.

Dear friends

There cannot be any peace and justice as long as imperialism will be dominating in the world. We call upon the peoples of the world to strengthen the struggle against imperialism in every country, to unite our voices and efforts for the dissolution of NATO and for the disengagement of our countries who are members of it. The global peace movement has to unite forces against the united effort of the capital and the monopolies, expressed for example by the G8.

Imperialism is not all-powerful and for sure it is not invincible! ■

WPC Contribution to the US Peace Council Workshop at the Conference Against NATO Summit, Chicago — May 18-19, 2012

By: Iraklis Tsavdaridis
Executive Secretary, WPC

“Humanitarian Imperialism or How the 1% Enlists the Military and NATO to Enrich Itself

Dear friends and comrades,

Allow me to thank the US Peace Council for the invitation to be here with you in Chicago, a city which marked the history of the workers' movement in the history. We salute the millions of peace loving people in the USA, the working people and all poor and oppressed in this centre of imperialism.

On the occasion of the NATO summit in Chicago the WPC would like to denounce once more the biggest war machinery in history of mankind, which is responsible for crimes against humanity from its foundation in 1949 till today.

NATO was never a defensive structure, not in 1952 when Greece and Turkey joined the “alliance” together and not during the existence of the Warsaw Pact, which was founded later than NATO and which was dissolved in 1991.

NATO was friendly related to all bloody and reactionary regimes and counterrevolutionary movements in the world, its governments and leaders were rolling red carpets to Pinochet and the Apartheid leaders, they were behind coups de' Etat and military dictatorships in Latin America and Europe.

Especially after 1991 the peoples of the world faced the further growing of the aggressiveness of imperialism and of NATO, with its military interventions in the former Yugoslavia which culminated in the 78 days bombing of 1999. This was the first time NATO neglected openly not only the UN and international law, but also its own statutes establishing the new doctrine which was approved at its summit of Washington celebrating then its 50th anniversary.

In the midst of the global economic crisis of capitalism, when millions of new people are getting impoverished even in the EU, the profits of the war industries are well off. Last year the total military expenses reached the record high of 1,54 trillion USD, the half of it spent by the USA alone. The whatsoever military budget adjustments in some of the NATO member states are related to the economic crisis and to a better coordination of their efforts and have nothing to do with a peace oriented approach of the governments. It is about “better value for money” so that the war machinery can be more efficient in order to persuade its “smart defence.”

All governments of the member states share responsibility in NATO, regardless the leading role of the US administration. The whatsoever different approaches on some issues reflect particular views and rivalries but they always lead to the common aggressive confrontation with the peoples.

Unfortunately there were illusions also about the current US administration in

regards and in comparison to the previous one. Life has proved that the Obama administration has not changed the slightest its imperialist policy and attitude, not towards the American capital and monopolies and their drive for more and more profits and not towards its people and the peoples of the world. The aggression of the USA, France, the UK and NATO against Libya in 2011, this bloody massacre of the Libyan people in order to secure the oil reserves and the respective violent regime change, is absolute comparable with what the previous administrations did in Yugoslavia (Clinton), Afghanistan and Iraq (G.W. Bush). It is obvious that nothing has changed, on the contrary, the US administration is leading



together with other powerful imperialist powers from Europe the plans for the “Greater Middle East”, having today Syria as its target and tomorrow Iran.

The WPC demands the unconditional and complete withdrawal of all US and NATO forces from Afghanistan, from Iraq and from the Serbian province of Kosovo. The “peace and prosperity” can not be granted through protectorates and limitation of the sovereignty of the peoples, especially not under occupation.

We demand to stop all kind of foreign interference in the domestic affairs of Syria and denounce the hypocritical concern of the imperialists towards the Syrian people. The WPC expresses its support to the people's genuine demands for democratic social and economic changes in Syria and their desire for peace and stability. The desire and aspirations of the Syrian people have nothing to do with the armed mercenary groups sponsored, trained and instructed by Turkey, Qatar or Saudi Arabia, who are pushing Syria into a civil war. At the same time more and more sanctions are being imposed on Syria, which is leading to the suffering of its people. We saw the situation on the ground during our recent visit to Syria. The people in Syria might be critical to many things in the political sys-

tem and for sure they have social-economic complaints and demands, but in no way do they accept foreign interference or military invasion to their country. The Syrian people don't want another Libya, where after the NATO massacre of last year, the country has been split off in parts and the tribes are killing each other.

And who has the moral and courage to teach and export democracy to Syria by the way? Is it the Gulf monarchies? Why is nobody speaking in the NATO all this period about the Saudi invasion to Bahrain? Who is able to teach the Arab peoples how to build democratic states, is it maybe the Greek governments who have by the way participated in all previous aggressions with the US and

are being carried out in the economic and political field all over the year, for the share of the pie everybody of them will take. But when it comes to the annual summit the G8 has a common ground which goes clearly against the interests of the peoples, of the workers and peasants, of the vast majority of our societies. The decisions of what the IMF and the World Bank will do are being consulted in the G8, the balance between the different powerful imperialist forces are being dealt with in the G8. All G8 states, except Russia and Japan are in the NATO. Japan had troops in Iraq and is participating in the US military plans in the Far East Asia. And Russia did not raise any veto last year when at the UN SC when the bombing against Libya was to start.

Dear friends,

The WPC organized two years ago with its partners in Lisbon (Yes to peace-No to NATO) a conference like the one here today and a huge rally and demonstration with more than 30.000 people in the streets of Lisbon. Our slogan was: “NATO is the enemy of peace and of the peoples- DISMANTLE IT!”

We are participating here in Chicago in continuation of the Lisbon people's counter summit to NATO, conveying our solidarity and our appreciation to the peace movement in the USA, which is struggling in difficult conditions against the same enemy. The 41 millions USD which are being spent by the city of Chicago and the US government for the NATO summit are being cut directly from social services from the American people.

NATO is meeting these days with its allies, more than 60 heads of state and governments will be in Chicago, converting this city into a fortress. NATO is going to discuss and concretize the doctrine approved in Lisbon and already tested in Libya in order to face its “new challenges”. They are speaking about “asymmetric threats” and establishing flexible NATO Response Forces (NRF) in order to intervene rapidly in any place where the interests of the capital and the monopolies will be at stake. NATO is moving forward for its Missile Defense Shield, while they don't refrain from a first strike option.

NATO is preparing and exercising for possible interventions inside its member states, since the discontent and anger of the peoples are growing especially with the consequences of the capitalist crisis. When NATO speaks about safeguarding peace and security it means it is preparing new aggressions and wars against peoples and nations.

NATO is making new reactionary plans hand in hand with the EU, which has established the European Army and its battle groups. All actions are well coordinated in order to suppress any protests and uprisings of the peoples, in order protect the flow of oil and the respective profits of the Multinational corporations.

They are speaking about new threats and

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Speech by Thanassis Pafilis ... (from p. 5)

we oppose the so called anti-regime forces in Syria, which are organized and supported by foreign imperialist powers.

We are particularly concerned about the developments in the South-East Mediterranean. Turkey increases its threats against Cyprus; the relations between Turkey and Israel are sharpening, that is to say the relations between two strong regional powers working within the imperialist plans for the control of the region, while Israel is increasing its aggressiveness against the people of Lebanon and the Lebanese resistance. It is obvious that the bourgeois class of Turkey is utilizing its economic and military power, that it seeks to play a strategic role in the field of energy as a powerful regional force and works according to a plan for the expansion of the Turkish monopoly interests in

the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Middle East in order to take a bigger share from the natural resources and the markets in the region utilizing the religious sentiment.

While the occupation of 37% of Cyprus by Turkey continues, the Turkish government is turning against the Republic of Cyprus by means of provocations and threats, against the sovereign rights of Cyprus, against its right to determine and exploit its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

We are obliged to inform the people that the actions of Turkey against Israel do not express the people's interests neither any kind of anti-imperialist stance. On the contrary they express the interests of the Turkish ruling class and the general plans that aim at the “New Middle East”. Similar imperialist plans unfold in Algeria where the European imperialists

seek an even tighter control of the natural resources and mainly of the natural gas.

We should note at this point that now in the case of Libya and Syria, of Iran, Nigeria and Somalia the imperialists use once again the UN and its resolutions. We would like to make clear that those who speak of the legitimization of imperialist assaults by the resolutions of the UN Security Council pose a danger and should be decisively countered by the peoples. It is necessary for the peoples to be informed that the UN has long been used for the imperialist plans, especially after the counterrevolutionary overthrows in the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries. International law, which expresses the international balance of forces and which has become very negative for the peoples is abused to support the imperialist aggression.

In conclusion these developments

highlight that our region, the region of the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East and Northern Africa, the general region which includes the Persian Gulf is region of great strategic importance because it possesses important energy routes and basic maritime channels.

A goal of the anti-imperialist movement is its contribution to the struggle for the overthrow of imperialism, the construction of a society free from the exploitation of man by man. The peoples can live peacefully on this basis. Otherwise the vicious circle of capitalist crises and wars will continue. The anti-imperialist movement condemns the unjust imperialist wars in the knowledge that wars are the continuation of politics by other violent means and are inevitable as long as society is separated into classes, as long as the exploitation of man by man exists. ■