

## Don't talk about the danger of war unless you are prepared to speak about *capitalism*!

As the US makes its final preparations for an attack on Iraq, the horror of this impending war, and the massive casualties that will almost certainly result, is blamed on everything except the real cause: the laws of motion of capitalist civilization. For some, war is imminent because of the “cowboy” in the White House, and the unilateralism of his administration, in contrast to Clinton who only unleashed missiles and bombers with the blessing of the UN or NATO. For others, this war is simply about oil. For others, it is about the need to distract the American electorate and play the card of patriotism in order to assure the re-election of the President. While each of these factors may play a role as proximate causes for the unleashing of war at this time and place, they do not explain the basic necessity for war that is integral to our civilization and that inevitably finds an outlet in an immediate cause of one kind or another.

Meanwhile, for others, the danger of war is due to the arrogance of America, unwilling to listen to the French, the Russians, and the Chinese, all of whom argue that it is possible to avoid war, if Bush is only willing to give UN inspection a chance. Yet, while the French prattle on about peace in Iraq, French troops are joining an orgy of ethnic cleansing in the Ivory Coast, just as they assisted in the genocide in Rwanda a decade ago. The Russian army engages in mass murder in Chechnya, while the Chinese continue their vicious ethnic cleansing of Tibet. Their objections to an American attack on Iraq are real enough, but they have nothing to do with opposition to war. What they object to is a war that will enhance American power, and thereby weaken theirs – as indeed it will; a war that will consolidate America's grip on the world, and thereby weaken their own projects for, at least, regional hegemony.

Even if the danger of an American attack were removed, that would not mean peace for Iraq. It would just replace the danger of dying at the hands of American missiles and bombs by the

danger of being murdered in the ethnic cleansing campaigns of the Ba'athist regime.

This war will bring death, disease and hunger for millions. They don't show up in the cost-benefit analyses of the Pentagon, they are not discussed on CNN. They are made faceless, nameless. The war-effort demands that their pain is hidden and the media intuitively understand that. They know that they must transform a brutal, impersonal industrial slaughter into a video game. The victims must be reduced to mere numbers. They must be subhumanized. The war propaganda is racist at its core because racism - the denial of the humanity of the “other”- is necessary to make the mass killing acceptable. The US government spends a lot of money to sell a tolerant image to the Muslim world but in the US itself, foreign-born Muslims are terrorized with mass arrests and deportations. Many are held in solitary confinement for no other reason than that they are Muslim. Basic rights of prisoners are denied. This is not done for security reasons but to send the message that “these people” can be treated in a way that would not be accepted for “normal,” Christian, Americans. It is done to devalue them, to make the slaughter of “their kind” acceptable.

What is driving the US is the need to prop-up a system of capitalist exploitation and to consolidate its geo-political hegemony. The real risk that the American ruling class is seeking to avoid, is the collapse of its capital assets. Capitalism was born out of scarcity and it cannot function properly without it. Its opposite, abundance, means – within the framework of capitalism – overproduction and crisis. While capitalist competition impels the system to ever greater productivity, that very development expels ever greater numbers of workers – now more than 1.5 billion – from the global productive process, and thereby drastically reduces global purchasing power. The capitalist reaction to the very over-capacity it engenders is to attack wages, thereby further reducing effective demand, and further increasing productivity, and therefore the plethora of

commodities seeking buyers. Since global over-capacity resurfaced in the late 1960's, capitalism has responded with inflationary demand-stimulation in the '70's, and an explosive growth of the public debt in the '80's. In the 1990's, the end of the cold war, globalization, and the explosion of information technology, seemed to provide capitalism with new hope. The combination of access to pools of cheap labor and higher productivity did boost profits, but at the same time it also raised the problem of over-capacity to an even greater scale. At the same time, the flight of capital seeking a safe haven, its search for places to store its value safely, protected from deflation, pushed up the "value" of the assets of the strongest capitals, especially the US – the controller of the global currency and guarantor of global order. But that wealth was just so much paper, a mere illusion, unless constantly fed by real profits. And that profit creation is jeopardized by the very efforts to perpetuate it. That is why capitalism in crisis is so dangerous. Its whole financial system collapses when there is a collapse of assets. Capitalism must go to any lengths to prevent that – including war!

That is why Bush wants to invade Iraq. Not to avenge his daddy, not to get cheap gas for American SUVs, but because the US economy is sitting on a mountain of 31 trillions dollars of debt, because the stock market bubble is bursting, because the dollar is plunging, because foreign capital owners are seeing investing in US assets increasingly as a risk. That's what makes this project so urgent. Iraq's oil could be a huge cash crop for US capital. The American occupation would give the US control over the oil price (paid in dollars, thank you) and where would the new Iraq invest its profits but in the US stock market? >From military bases in Iraq, the US would increase its leverage over the Middle East and the projection of its power would inspire the confidence of capital owners

all over the world. That is the grand scheme that motivates this bloody undertaking, for which 9/11 and the military weakening of Iraq (not it's growing threat) provided the right conditions. It follows a logic inseparable from the very existence of capitalism. And that is why it is ultimately futile to oppose this war if you are not prepared to oppose *capitalism!*

Capitalist crisis pushes "normal" competition to become a violent struggle. This is the real source of terrorism, of the increasing number of conflicts in the world. There's no escape from this. The future of capitalism is more war, more misery, more racism and despair. We must end it before it ends us. It doesn't have to be this way. Most people are fundamentally decent and want nothing else but to be free from want, free from fear, free from oppression and they want the same for their fellow human beings. We can organize global production and global society for that goal. We can put an end to this whole profit system, to the system based on wage-labor, which has become outdated, absurd, and lethal. It's a huge task and it starts with confidence in ourselves as human beings, as workers. Let's trust ourselves. When we follow unions or parties we are led time and again to defeat. Lets not allow ourselves to be divided by nation, race, gender, religion or ethnicity. Let's develop our self-organization and solidarity, let's collectively defend our standard of living, and stand up for the interests of the global working class, for humankind. Let's come together in a resistance without compromise that blossoms into global revolution.

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