

## **Political Declaration of the Assembly of the World Peace Council Kathmandu, Nepal / 20-23 July 2012**

The 2012 Assembly of the World Peace Council, held from July 20-23 in Kathmandu and hosted by the Nepal Peace and Solidarity Council, concluded with the adoption of the following Political Declaration:

The World Peace Council salutes the people of Nepal and all peace-loving forces in the country. We express our solidarity with the struggle to establish the New Democratic Republic of Nepal where the Nepali people, following the abolition of the monarchy, will become the masters of their fortunes.

Since the last WPC Assembly, in 2008, several international events have shaped the central issues in the struggle for peace. Despite imperialism's dominance, it faces an intensifying conflict with its victims – the peoples of the world who are struggling against exploitation, for social justice and peace, for sovereignty and the right to determine their own future. At the same time antagonism between different imperialist centres is growing, as they each manoeuvre to increase their spheres of influence and control over resources.

Our struggle can be only successful if it aims at the causes of suffering for hundreds of millions, at the causes of wars and occupation, and at new threats to peace and security. To fight for peace, we must fight against imperialism.

The deepening capitalist economic crisis, first felt in the US in 2008, has rapidly expanded through Europe and is reverberating throughout the world. The response from imperialism and anti-people governments has been to impose barbaric austerity measures and attack hard won labor and social rights. Their objective is to increase exploitation, dismantle and privatize public services, and minimize the social role of the state. The result is worsening living conditions for the majority of the population, deepening inequality and social injustice, and reduced democracy.

Alongside these attacks is a growing ideological campaign whose objective is to rewrite history, confuse the population and weaken resistance. This offensive includes the anti-communist campaigns in Europe, the recognition of fascist groups in the Baltic states, and the strengthening of fascist organizations in the attack on people's movements.

Despite the economic crisis, military spending continues to increase. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, global military spending rose by 50% between 2001 and 2010. This is led by the US, whose 2011 military budget of 700 billion dollars was the highest in its history and half of all global military spending. The combined military expenditures of NATO member countries constitute 72% of the world's whole.

Imperialism increases its aggressiveness against the peoples around the world

Imperialism is becoming increasingly aggressive, threatening peace and sovereignty, and moving to reassign markets and redraw borders to plunder natural resources. The US, NATO, EU and other imperialist forces are seeking new instruments and pretexts for aggression. Among these are "responsibility to protect", plans for "democratization" of the Middle East and other regions, heightened use of subversive action, and recruitment of mercenaries to carry out crimes against humanity. This strategy includes blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter, distortion of the UN to make it an instrument for aggression, and massive manipulation of the media. The WPC condemns both those

who initiate and carry out expansionist wars, and those who remain silent in the face of crimes against humanity such as occurred in Libya under UNSC Resolution 1973.

Regions like the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean and Latin America, are targeted by imperialism for their abundant natural resources and strategic importance. Interference, aggression, war and occupation continue, with actions in the Balkans, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa.

We call upon all peace loving forces to confront the growing danger of religious fundamentalism and forms of sectarian politics in the Middle East, Asia and throughout the world. This danger has a new dimension, as it is being utilized by imperialism to weaken the united struggle of the people.

Israel remains imperialism's spearhead in the Middle East, pursuing a policy of hostility and aggression in the region. It continues its occupation of the Golan Heights in Syria and the Sheba Farms in Lebanon. Israel has one of the biggest nuclear weapons forces in the world, yet it uses the claim of Iran's nuclear weapons program to justify repeated threats, sanctions and a debilitating economic embargo. Its objective, in conjunction with the US and other imperialist forces, is to provoke Iran's economic collapse and facilitate military intervention. The WPC expresses our solidarity with the people of Iran, in their complex struggle to achieve peace, democracy and social progress, and we categorically oppose external threats and sanctions.

In Palestine, with the support of the US and EU, Israel continues its policies of occupation, expansion of settlements, the wall of separation and checkpoints, arbitrary arrests and selective assassinations. These policies together constitute a slow genocide before the eyes of the world.

We reaffirm our support and solidarity with the Palestinian people, for ending the occupation and for an independent Palestinian State within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Furthermore, we demand the right to return for Palestinian refugees, based on UNGA Resolution 194, and the release of all Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.

At the time of our Assembly, the most immediate target of imperialist aggression is Syria. Operating with the political, military and financial support of the US, leading EU countries, Turkey and willing Arab countries, the Free Syria Army has carried out acts of subversion and sabotage against Syria. It is the sole right of the Syrian people to determine their future and leadership, free from foreign interference. We support the just demand of the Syrian people for peaceful political, economic, social and democratic change, and we denounce all foreign efforts to intervene and undermine Syria's national sovereignty. From this Assembly, we urgently call on all progressive and peace-loving forces to express their solidarity with the Syrian people.

Inter-imperialist rivalries are intensifying in the energy-rich eastern Mediterranean, where a large multinational military machine has gathered. These developments seriously threaten peace and security for the people of the region. The WPC reiterates our condemnation of the 38-year Turkish occupation of Cyprus. We demand the full demilitarization of the island, including the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops and closure of all foreign bases, and the reunification of Cyprus. We support a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, with political equality as described in UN resolutions.

In central Asia, the US is trying exit its disastrous military presence in Afghanistan, while maintaining its extensive network of military bases. It continues to grossly violate the sovereignty of Pakistan, carrying out criminal bombings using drone aircraft.

The US has declared it will deploy 60 percent of its naval force in the Asia Pacific region, through its "pivot to Asia." Alongside this, it is developing strategic alliances with several countries in the region.

These include US-led joint military and naval exercises, increased US military aid to certain countries, and US military deployment to Australia which is expected to reach 5000 US troops by 2015. All of this is aimed at expanding US military presence and exploitation of resources in a region that is a center of world economic development. This is a grave threat to stability, security and peace in the region – the struggle for peace in the Asia Pacific has become a priority in the struggle for peace in the world.

On the Korean Peninsula, the DPRK continues to be threatened by US military bases and nuclear warheads. Repeated joint military exercises by the US, Japan and South Korea serve to escalate tension. The WPC supports the Korean people's struggle against imperialist plans, for independence and sovereignty, for demilitarization and nuclear disarmament, and for the peaceful reunification of Korea.

The peoples of the Asia Pacific region continue to suffer from past US aggressions – the continuing effects of Agent Orange used against the people of Vietnam, the thousands of unexploded bombs in Laos, and the ongoing damage from the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The WPC demands that the perpetrators of these war crimes assume full responsibility. The struggle against the development and use of weapons of mass destruction is a key element in the global struggle for peace.

In Africa, brutal exploitation by multinational corporations continues with the full military support of the US and EU. Millions of people live in misery and thousands die every day due to hunger, lack of medicine, and contaminated water. Imperialist forces pursue their long-standing policy of divide and rule by direct intervention, and also indirectly by fostering divisions and civil clashes.

Poverty, instability and insecurity are made worse by high levels of corruption in a number of African governments, and also by tragedies like the 2011 food crisis which threatened the lives of 13 million people in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. These conditions are also causes of war and conflict.

We denounce the reactivation of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), through which US imperialism seeks to deepen and expand its military presence and operations on the continent. The recent US-led aggression against Libya – with the full support of the powerful EU and NATO countries – had clear neo-colonialist aims. The resulting instability in Libya has caused multiple problems for neighboring countries.

Many Latin American nations, inspired by the Cuban Revolution, have produced progressive social, economic and political achievements that have improved the living conditions of the poor and working people. The WPC supports these developments, which reflect the peoples' long struggles for empowerment and control of their destiny.

Several governments in Latin America are now committed to democracy, social progress, regional economic integration, national sovereignty and peace. US imperialism, in league with reactionary forces in the region, is threatening anti-imperialist governments with particular pressure on socialist Cuba and Venezuela. It is also trying to subvert progressive governments in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. The WPC condemns the recent coups in Honduras and Paraguay. We affirm our solidarity with the Paraguayan resistance and the struggle for restoration of the democratically elected president, Fernando Lugo. We repeat our condemnation of the US blockade of Cuba and demand the release from the US of the Cuban Five political prisoners. We also denounce State terrorism in Colombia and express our solidarity with the Colombian people in their struggle for a political solution to the conflict in their country.

NATO: enemy of peace and the peoples

NATO, the largest military organization in the world, is imperialism's key military instrument. At the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, NATO adopted a new strategic concept that expanded its area of operation to a global scale. The Lisbon Summit also marked the deepening coalition of the EU with NATO, and declared NATO a pillar of defence for the European Union.

At its Chicago Summit in May 2012, NATO reaffirmed that nuclear weapons, particularly through the US nuclear arsenal, are a core component of its military capabilities. It also declared its commitment to nuclear first strike, to expanding its nuclear sharing program, and to the US missile defence system in Europe.

The dissolution of NATO is a priority demand for the WPC, as is the struggle within each NATO member state for withdrawal from the criminal alliance.

#### Military bases: imperialism's tentacles around the world

Other military instruments of imperialism are its foreign bases, scattered around the world, and its naval fleets present in all the seas and oceans. These aim to control natural resources and trade, and are a threat of aggression and interference against peoples and nations. The struggle to eliminate foreign military bases is part of the indivisible struggle for peace and against imperialism.

Holding our Assembly in Asia, we express our solidarity to the peoples of Japan, Philippines, and Korea who are struggling for the removal of the US military bases in their countries.

We also condemn the drive by NATO and imperialist countries to militarize the Arctic region, and we support efforts toward an international treaty creating a demilitarized Arctic zone of peace.

#### Reaffirming the Stockholm Appeal and the ban on nuclear weapons

While imperialist countries speak about nuclear non-proliferation they continue to develop, test and stockpile their own nuclear arsenals. They use the NPT as a tool to interfere with countries who are developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Imperialist countries are developing new aspects of nuclear weapons proliferation, particularly through "tactical" or "smart" nuclear weapons and multinational and drone-based delivery systems.

We reaffirm, the historical document of the WPC, the "Stockholm Appeal", which in the 1950's mobilised hundreds of millions of people around the world in the struggle to ban nuclear weapons and to declare their use a crime against humanity. We repeat our demand for such a ban, and we support the international signature campaign, "Appeal for a Total Ban on Nuclear Weapons".

The WPC expresses solidarity with the people of Japan who are suffering the grave consequences of the nuclear accident of Fukushima. We support the demand of peace-loving forces in Japan to shut down all nuclear power plants, which were installed in the framework of the US nuclear strategy under the US-Japan Security Treaty. The WPC supports the use of alternative sources of energy.

Strengthen the WPC for a new wave of struggles against imperialism and in defence of peace

Imperialism's increased aggression against the peoples of the world puts humanity at serious risk. Today, more than ever, we need to intensify our anti-imperialist and solidarity actions and strengthen WPC member movements in each country. This way, we can confront and defeat our main enemy.

To meet this challenge, and place our movement at the forefront of the global struggle for peace, we must build a broad anti-imperialist front for peace. We must connect our peace agenda with all progressive struggles – for decent jobs and wages, against commercialization of culture and education, for a safe and secure environment.

We highlight some priorities for the WPC's anti-imperialist struggle for peace in the present period:

The struggle against all imperialist wars, aggression and provocation

The struggle against foreign military bases, for the dissolution of NATO and for withdrawal in each NATO member state

The struggle against revived fascism and the rewriting of history

Solidarity with the just struggles of peoples around the world

The elimination of all nuclear weapons around the world

The end of all types of foreign occupation and support for the right of the peoples for sovereignty, including Indigenous Peoples

To denounce violations of international law and the abuse of the UN

Solidarity with workers, progressive youth, poor farmers and all people all over the world who are struggling against barbaric austerity measures imposed by imperialism and anti-people governments

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