

Hyper-imperialism - A Dangerous Threat to Humanity

Fiona Edwards of No Cold War examines a new study from the Tricontinental Institute which presents a clear analysis that it is the US which poses the greatest threat to humanity today

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Landmark [new study](#) from the Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research and Global South Insights provides an illuminating analysis of the world situation today.

Hyper-Imperialism: A Dangerous, Decadent New Stage makes a compelling case that imperialism, integrated by United States, operates as a highly organised, unified, militarised bloc of countries in the global North which aims to dominate the countries of the global South, the majority of humanity.

Due to the relative economic decline of the US-led bloc compared to the global South, including China, the US is increasingly forced to rely on its continuing lead in military power as it attempt to maintain global dominance.

"The bottom line is that there is one world system that is managed dangerously by an imperialist bloc," writes Vijay Prashad, director of the Tricontinental Institute. Indeed, the study comprehensively demolishes any notion that the United States is engaged in an "inter-imperialist rivalry" with Russia or China.

In the case of China the US regards the rise of this "socialist independent" country, an economic superpower with an economy now larger than the US's in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms, as an existential threat to its global hegemony.

Hyper-Imperialism shows the US's aggression towards Russia is because it is a "strongly sovereign seeking" country and therefore unwilling to subordinate itself to Washington.

Russia and China, both powerful countries, have become closer in recent years. “The dual defeat of Russia and China” is identified as the principal goal of the US’s international strategy.

This US strategic agenda was strongly echoed in January 2024 in a speech by Britain’s Defence Secretary Grant Shapps who said:

“The era of the peace dividend is over ... in five years’ time we could be looking at multiple theatres [of war] involving Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.”

There is a significant danger that should such a global confrontation take place, it could escalate into a nuclear war with the potential to destroy human civilisation.

The responsibility on the international anti-war movement to provide the clearest leadership in opposing this US-led war drive is obvious.

Hyper-Imperialism is an invaluable resource for the movement because it offers an extremely clear explanation of the dangerous world situation we face today, which can be drawn upon to strengthen the understanding and anti-imperialist orientation of the movement.

US Imperialism Is the Main Enemy

Hyper-imperialism presents a clear analysis that it is the US which poses the greatest threat to humanity, with its dominance of on the means of destruction.

The study cites ground-breaking research showing that the US’s military spending is more than twice the amount acknowledged by the US government — at a staggering \$1.5 trillion in 2022.

The US has 902 overseas foreign military bases “heavily concentrated in bordering regions or buffer zones around China.”

The extent of the US’s military power extends further due to Washington’s control of the global North as “an integrated military, political, and economic bloc composed of 49 countries.” This means that the US controls, through Nato and other means, an astounding 74.3 per cent of all military spending globally.

The contrast between the US and China is also astonishing. The US spends 21 times more on its military per person than China does. China has one foreign military base compared to 902 US foreign military bases.

These facts entirely disprove the idea, adopted by some sections of the Western left, that both the US and China represent a “threat” to humanity and the world faces an “inter-imperialist rivalry.” The main threat to humanity clearly emanates from Washington not Beijing.

A Unified Imperialist Bloc

A central point made in Hyper-Imperialism is that the world is today is not defined by “inter-imperialist rivalry,” that the contradictions between imperialist countries now are “non-

antagonist and secondary” with “Germany, Japan, France and all other imperialist powers” subordinating their interests on essential issues to those of the US.

The Nato-proxy war in Ukraine against Russia and Israeli offensive in Gaza are identified as key developments that have consolidated “an integrated, military focused imperialist bloc” which aims to “maintain a grip on the global South” and “dominate Eurasia” — a part of the world that has escaped the US’s control. It is also reflected in Europe’s increasing subordination to Washington’s new cold war offensive against China.

This reflects a fundamental change in the organisation of the global North. In previous global crises of the imperialist system, as shown in World War I and World War II, there was a violent clash between imperialist powers and the global South, including socialist forces, operated in that overall context.

Today the main contradiction is between a unified imperialist bloc led by the US against the global South as whole, including socialist states.

Of course contradictions within the imperialist global North camp continue to exist, and progressives should attempt to exploit these, but they are of a secondary character.

The Rise of the China and the Global South

The US’s increasing military aggression is a response to immense global shifts in recent decades, accelerated following the financial crash of 2008, which has seen the power of the global North eroded in many spheres, including economically, diplomatically and technologically.

Such developments strike against the core of the world order as it has existed for centuries. As Hyper-Imperialism strikingly puts it: “For the first time in over 600 years, there is now a credible economic and political alternative to the domination of world affairs by the Europeans and their descendant white-settler colonial states. First, is the socialist grouping led by China. Second, are the growing aspirations for national sovereignty, economic modernisation, and multilateralism, emerging from the global South.”

The emergence of China as the world’s largest and most dynamic economy, the rise of the global South and the growth of projects for South-South economic development are thoroughly analysed. The relative decline of the US and wider global North is also examined.

Hyper-Imperialism is clear to stress, however, that unlike the global North, the global South is not a unified bloc.

What is emerging is “new mood” in the global South that has seen the global South increasingly reject the US’s aggressive foreign policy agenda. This has been very evident in the US/Nato proxy war in Ukraine against Russia which the global South has refused to support, instead continuing to cooperate economically with Russia and advocating for a peaceful resolution of the conflict not escalation.

The global South has also strongly pushed for ceasefire in Gaza, isolating the US and Israel at the UN general assembly on multiple occasions. South Africa’s decision to take a case accusing Israel of committing genocide in Gaza to the International Court of Justice is another example of the independent mood in the global South.

The US is desperate to stop the rise of China and the increasing independence of the global South. Hyper-Imperialism warns that “there is a clear and present danger that imperialism will continue its militarist path and rely on its military dominance to offset its growing relative economic and political decline.”

The most important task for progressives today is to build the broadest possible movement against this US-led attack on humanity. Hyper-imperialism is a must-read for those who want to sharpen their understanding of the key threat facing the world.

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