

Lebanon, Syria, Iran and the Coming Imperialist Re-Division of the World

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The sheer brutality of the butchery of civilians by Israeli WMD – bombs and fighter planes provided by the United States – on Lebanon is firstly a warning to the rest of the world from the United States: ‘accept US global domination, or else’; and secondly, it is the beginning of a serious struggle for all-out control over Middle-East, Caspian Basin and Central Asian oil and gas. It is not the puppet Israel but the US itself who sets the tone of this purposefully brutal war, a war which opens up a qualitative change in US aggression and inter-imperialist conflict, a period that will draw the whole world into intensifying horrors and suffering. At the same time this new period opens a large window for the dramatic re-appearance of world-wide mass class struggle bringing workers and youth back into the centre-stage of global politics.

Increasing numbers of analysts and commentators now say the Israeli war against Lebanon was planned and prepared for in detail, in rooms in the White House, Pentagon and no doubt elsewhere. The Lebanon ‘war’ is definitely a proxy-war. In the first hours after Israel started bombing Lebanon on 12 July – the US’s Bush and Rice, the UK’s Blair and Israel’s Prime Minister Olmert, all started naming Iran and Syria as the real problem, the real backers of Hezbollah, even pathetically, declaring Iran had plans to dominate the whole Middle-East. The coolness and content of their language was almost identical. Only the US has the power to force the other parties to speak as one – but it should be said that Britain and Israel are willing junior partners in the slaughter. It should be mentioned, when I mention the US or Israel, or any country, I mean by this the ruling class of these countries and not the people.

Condoleezza Rice, the US’s Secretary of State, visited Lebanon on the 24th of July, nearly two weeks after the bombing started and her statement lyingly declared that all that was needed to stop the bombing was the release of the two captured Israeli soliders – the excuse that Israel used to start its bombing of Lebanon before a single Hezbollah missile had been launched at Israel. The next day in Tel Aviv, standing next to Israel’s Olmert, the US’s Rice announced that, “It is time for a new Middle East, it is time to say to those who do not want a different kind of Middle East that we will prevail; they will not ... we need a durable solution.” She said, “What we are seeing is the birth pangs of a new Middle East, it’s hard. We are going through a very violent time.”

However, the US-Israel-UK ‘evil’ axis has already created a ‘new’ Lebanon, bombing it back 30 years, killing many hundreds of mostly women and children, injuring thousands and displacing over a million. However – echoing the ‘bogged-down’ occupations of Iraq and Iran – after three weeks the Israeli military ground war has hardly penetrated beyond its own borders into South Lebanon as the Hezbollah are, to date, holding them back, having spent

years digging-in and preparing for this attack. This is why Israel under US command is calling up tens of thousands of military reservists in order to take south Lebanon: this has become paramount for the axis.

So, why is the US so brutally, so suddenly, pushing this war to create their 'new Middle-East'? The reasons do not belong to Israeli security at all and are two-fold.

Firstly the United States' struggle for total global domination after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 has faced multiple setbacks and defeats in many ways and places, especially since their invasion of Iraq. The most serious losses and retreats are in the fight to control oil supplies in several parts of the world.

Secondly, the US's own mountains of economic and financial trade deficits are still increasing at a faster rate and the US dollar is on the precipice – with many economists now concerned about the danger of US hyper-inflation and economic crash. The sheer brutality of this war is about the US struggling to re-establish itself as the singular global imperialist power it was in the 1990's, and 'struggling' is the operative word. Serious readers of this article, if you do not have accurate maps in your heads of the Middle-East and Eurasia, would benefit from getting them out.

US TRYING TO REVERSE ITS GLOBAL LOSSES

Whilst the US has been bogged down in the sands of Iraqi resistance and the hills of Afghan resistance; they have also lost out to China and Russia who have successfully cooperated in carving-up almost the whole of the oil rich Central Asia and are making gains in the Caspian Basin and the Middle East (details below). The US has lost in its attempt to dominate South America with the collapse of the all-Americas FTAA last year brought on by the masses in many countries voting-in anti and semi-anti US governments. The US has failed, due to mass popular action, to bring down left-wing Chavez in oil-rich Venezuela. The US has lost out to the Islamists in Somalia who have taken Mogadishu. The US has been outmanoeuvred in several oil-rich African countries by China (details below).

Further, the US have been facing increasingly belligerent responses from their main imperialist challengers to their global hegemony from Europe, China and Russia. Iran is standing firm against US bullying and is busy making many economic-energy deals with China in particular, but also India, Pakistan, Russia, Venezuela, Turkmenistan, etc. The US have been blamed by almost all other World Trade Organisation members for the seemingly definitive recent collapse of the WTO Doha-round of talks at the G8 in Geneva, which has been rambling on since 2001. They have faced increasingly strong warnings from many world economists and authorities about the dangers of their ever-increasing financial and trade deficits, as the US economy and especially the dollar is on a precipice (details below) that could well lead to hyper-inflation and economic depression making the 1929 Wall Street collapse and global recession, which led to WWII, appear mild. Ironically, for these neo-liberals, deficit-trading and financing is awfully neo-Keynesian.

The internal and external problems facing the US overlap and interpenetrate considerably. The present conjuncture is so serious, so unique, that Newt Gingrich, famous Republican and former Speaker of the House of Representatives, has declared that this Israeli war against Lebanon is in fact the beginning of World War III. Whether history will prove him

correct or whether this war is a forerunner proxy war, we will find out within months, rather than years.

SYRIA AND THE EAST MEDITERRANEAN COAST-LINE

Before we go on to examine why the major target of this war on Lebanon is Iran, there is another main reason for the brutality in Lebanon. It is the battle for military control of the East Mediterranean region by the US and its puppets, in declining order: the UK, then Israel and Turkey, then Azerbaijan and Georgia. Their battle on this coastline is against Syria and Russia. I thank the well known academic Michel Chossudovsky for his article on 26 July, 'The War on Lebanon and the Battle for Oil', in which he provides all the evidence (I have checked out his sources). I will merely summarise his excellent article here, which also provides useful maps, quoting freely.

<http://globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=CHO20060726&articleId=2824>

Chossudovsky writes, "Virtually unnoticed, the inauguration of the Ceyhan-Tblisi-Baku (BTC) oil pipeline, which links the Caspian Sea to the Eastern Mediterranean took place on the 13th July, at the very outset of the Israeli [US sponsored] bombings of Lebanon ... the reception was in Istanbul, hosted by Turkey's President Ahmet Necdet Sezer in the plush surroundings of the Çýrađan Palace."

British Petroleum's CEO Lord Brown was there and BP lead the BTC pipeline consortium of western oil companies. Senior government officials, top oil ministers and bosses of western oil companies, from Britain, the US, Israel and Turkey were all present ... "the BTC pipeline totally bypasses the territory of the Russian Federation. It transits through the former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Georgia, both of which have become US 'protectorates', firmly integrated into a military alliance with the US and NATO. Moreover, both Azerbaijan and Georgia have longstanding military cooperation with Israel. Israel has a stake in the Azeri oil fields, from which it imports some 20% of its oil."

In April 2006, Israel and Turkey announced plans for four underwater pipelines, transporting water, electricity, natural gas and oil to Israel, by-passing Syrian and Lebanese territory. "The pipeline to bring water to Israel, pumping water from upstream resources of the Tigris and Euphrates river system in Anatolia ... has been a long-run strategic objective of Israel to the detriment of Syria and Iraq."

The oil pipeline is planned to be very large, from which Israel can siphon-off all it needs. Israel already has internal pipelines which would be used to carry this water to Israel's Red Sea port of Eilat, with direct links to the Indian Ocean.

He continues, "Diverting Central Asian oil and gas to the Eastern Mediterranean (under Israeli protection), for re-export back to Asia, serves to undermine the inter-Asian energy market, which is based on the development of direct pipeline corridors linking Central Asia and Russia to South Asia, China and the Far East. Ultimately, this design is intended to weaken Russia's role in Central Asia and cut off China from Central Asian resources. It is also intended to isolate Iran. Meanwhile, Israel has emerged as a new powerful player in the global energy market ... "

And things get even more serious. He writes, “Meanwhile, Moscow has responded to the US-Israeli-Turkish design to militarise the East Mediterranean coastline with plans to establish a Russian naval base in the Syrian port of Tartus ... Moscow intends to deploy an air defence system ... the S-300PMU-2 Favorit system [which] will be manned and serviced by Russian personnel ... Tartus is strategically located 30 km from the Lebanese border.” Russia has also agreed to modernise Syrian ground and air defences, modernise its MIG-29 fighters and its submarines – “these developments have far-reaching implications.”

Chossudovsky sums up: “The bombing of Lebanon is part of a carefully planned and coordinated military road map. The extension of the war into Syria and Iran has already been contemplated by US and Israeli military planners. This broader military agenda is intimately related to strategic oil and oil pipelines ... Israel is now fully part of the Anglo-American axis serving the interests of the Western oil giants in the Middle-East and Central Asia.”

IRAN IS THE MAIN TARGET

Just look at a map: Iran is that country which has both the oil-rich Caspian Basin and Turkmenistan/Central Asia to its immediate north – and also Middle-East oil and gas to its immediate south and south-west, including control of the Strait of Hormuz through which almost all Middle-East oil-tankers travel. Like no other country Iran strategically straddles a clear majority of the world’s oil and gas reserves. Further, in its own right Iran has the world’s third largest oil reserves and the world’s second largest gas reserves after Russia – all this at a time in history when what is called ‘peak oil’ is fast approaching: that moment when global oil supplies begin running out, a time when demand is also rapidly increasing from developing countries.

With the global and internal crisis the US is facing, described above, if the US is to reassert itself as the singular dominant imperialist power in the world, then it desperately needs regime change in Iran. The US needs a puppet like the former Shah of Iran.

The US is bogged down in Iraq, but Iran is not Iraq! Iran’s population is almost 90 million to Iraq’s 26 million. Further there is a very high level of culture in Iran, inherited partially from it being the heart of the old Persian empire, but also in recent decades there’s been a high investment in industry, research, education, sport and the arts. Further, Iran is overwhelmingly Shia, whereas Iraq is divided with 63% Shia, and 33% Sunni. The Shia majority in Iraq, mainly in the energy rich south and south east, are increasingly appreciating Iranian weapons and finance in its battle against US/UK occupation and against the increasingly vulnerable Sunni population. Indeed, the occupation of Iraq has totally backfired, dramatically increasing the influence of Iran in the Shia oil areas of Iraq. Iran and Syria may have made the most ferocious protests against the Israeli assault on Lebanon, but the next most ferocious condemnation in the Arab/Muslim world of both Israel and its US support came from the elected Iraqi Prime Minister, who is Shia himself.

Further, Iran has armed itself far better to meet any US-led invasion than Iraq did in 2003, which, along with the outline above, is why many military commentators the world over think it unbelievable that the US is seriously considering military conflict with Iran, especially considering how the US military is bogged down in both Iraq and Afghanistan – but these

commentators do not understand the desperation of the US at this historic juncture.

That the US is politically and economically losing out rapidly across the world and is also in internal economic and financial crisis – means that their one remaining arena of total global superiority, military power, must now come to the fore in a much more aggressive way than in Iraq or Afghanistan. Indeed amongst leading politicians and generals in the US there has been recent public talk of using mini-nukes or so-called tactical-nukes against Iran.

Getting ‘international’ forces into the buffer zone in South Lebanon, using mainly European forces, but not US or UK forces, was Tony Blair’s plan, announced on the second day of Israeli bombing of Lebanon, a plan he has since been pushing within Europe and with the UN’s leader Kofi Annan. This too seems to be part of the US broader plan, with Blair getting immediate support from both the US and Israel. To date, Euroland countries are very wary of becoming junior partners in plans for the US’s ‘new Middle East’. If successful, it would release Israeli, British and US troops for action elsewhere – and that is in Iran. Whether they go for Syria first or by-pass it, is uncertain at this stage.

Certainly within days of Israel’s war beginning, a New York Times article published a leak that the US is speedily delivering large numbers of lazer and satellite guided bombs to Israel – not denied by the US government – and remember, it is not Israel but the US who guide the satellite guided bombs. Further, when Israeli commanders were challenged that they are now using cluster-bombs in populated areas of Lebanon, outlawed across the world, they accepted this was the case.

The very scale of destruction in Lebanon, of its ordinary people, of its infrastructure, water, sewage, electricity, gas, roads, communications, airports, seaports, homes, industry, food warehouses, milk factories, of UN monitoring posts (who are observing Israeli atrocities) and more – is a loaded message to anyone who opposes the US in the world. The message is: ‘The US and our allies will inflict the most brutal and barbaric destruction if you oppose our total domination anywhere in the world – get in line or else!’

Even before these horrific pictures on our TV’s, websites and newspapers of a bombed-out Lebanon and its people, a clear majority of people in the US and UK were saying it was a mistake to invade Iraq. 20-30 million people around the world protested against war on the streets in February 2003 before the invasion of Iraq. This is well in advance of opposition at this equivalent time in the Vietnam war, the spectre of which now hangs over Bush and Blair. In Israel too, protests against the bombing of Lebanon are increasing in size every other day.

But most significant of all, it is the Arab and Muslim masses and workers – whose justifiable anger grows daily against US-sponsored Israeli atrocities in Lebanon and Palestinian areas – who pose the greatest threat to US plans for their ‘new Middle-East’. The US invaded Iraq with the hope of regime change happening in several nearby countries. The truth of the matter is that today regime change is due in the region – foremost in the pro-US regimes of Egypt and Saudi-Arabia and even Turkey.

However, it is not all bad news for Bush and Blair. The US has military air-bases almost completely surrounding Iran: to the south in various Gulf states and Saudi Arabia; to its east in Afghanistan and Pakistan; to the north-west in Turkey, to the north-east in some of the Central Asian states; and to the west and in Iraq, Cyprus and Turkey – and of course there’s

Israel in the west. Further the US has significant navy warships and aircraft carriers it could use to control the Gulf waters, though they would be subject to Iran's considerable well-disguised missile batteries all along its south coast, especially around the narrow Strait of Hormuz and opposite Kuwait. It has a naval base in Oman near the Strait of Hormuz, and in the Indian Ocean in the British territory of Diego Garcia, the US has both naval and air bases.

One powerful tool the US planners most certainly have considered is to extend its policy giving Iraqi Kurds 'freedom', towards Iranian Kurds - offering Kurds the possibility of an enlarged 'free' Kurdistan - and be sure, significant numbers of Kurds would fight for independence from Iran on its north-western border, armed to the teeth by the US. The US may even try persuade and bribe or threaten Turkey to grant its Kurdistan population semi-autonomous rule, linking in with both Iranian and Iraqi Kurds - in a completely unified Kurdistan. Such a turnaround would make Turkish entry into the EU much easier. Such a pro-US Kurdistan of some 27 million people, already well-used to guerilla war, would be a major boost to the US in a crucial region - and a Kurdish war for independence from Iran would take up considerable military resources from Iran. Have a look at the 'Kurdistan' map on www.wilkepedia.org

But at this moment in time, the fight is in Lebanon, and Hezbollah on the ground are proving a military match against Israeli forces. Again, the US has miscalculated, and tens of thousands more Israeli reservists are being called up whilst the bombings and slaughter continues. Whilst the pro-western Lebanese government is doing nothing, Lebanese political opinion is shifting rapidly. According to the Beruit Center for Research and Information, after two weeks of bombing Beirut, 86.7% now support Hezbollah. Clear majorities in the Christian, Sunni and Druze communities support the Shia Hezbollah. They would win the next elections, as Hamas did in Palestine - or more likely, they could just take power in the increasing vacuum created by Lebanese government paralysis. The proxy-Israeli war against Lebanon is a sign not of US strength but the beginning of a desperate attempt to reassert US global hegemony by military means - even at the expense of failing and putting the future existence of Israel and its significant working class on the line - not that the vast bulk of the US ruling class care about that.

PREPARING TO RE-DIVIDE THE WORLD

Today, US attempts to re-dominate the world as it did in much of the 1990's continues apace, but they are not as confident as they appear in media statements. Parallel to this process, there is clear public evidence (details below) that the United States and Chinese ruling elites are now well into advanced preparations for a classic geographic imperialist re-division of the world, both preparing their own versions of what west European capital has done in eating-up central and eastern Europe since 1990 - now set to grow as far as Russia, the Caspian basin and into the Middle-East with Turkey. For the US such a re-division would be a major retreat from its present hopes of total global domination, but it seems a more realistic one.

We now live in a transitional phase that has reached the height of the globalisation phase of neo-liberal finance-monopoly capitalism, especially of the US dominated World Bank and IMF. The bombing of Lebanon has opened a trajectory to imperialist re-division and global polarisation between the biggest ruling classes, but also announces intensified war against

the global working class.

The beginnings of such imperialist re-partitioning of the world would declare the opening of a new global era of wars and revolutions that might well make the the first half of the last century with two world wars look tame by comparison. Lenin's understanding of imperialism looks as fresh today, if not fresher, than when written in 1916, "It is beyond doubt that capitalism's transition to the stage of monopoly capitalism, to finance capitalism, is connected with the intensification of the struggle for partitioning the world." (Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism).

THE US-LED NORTH AMERICAN BLOC

North America, led by the US rulers and Bush, but also joined by the Canadian and Mexican premiers and ruling classes: are already making advanced plans for an EU-type enlargement behind the backs of their populations - who would not tolerate this if they knew what is urgently being prepared. There have been annual summits of the premiers for several years, but in the last two years, since the US became bogged down in Iraq, the premiers have ordered a rapid stepping up of making detailed plans for much greater integration of the three countries than has ever been considered before.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/03/20050323-5.html>

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/>

The US attempt at an all-America's FTAA bloc it could dominate, collapsed last year because of the South American masses' increasing resistance to US domination in recent years. As such the US has recently revamped the North American Free Trade Agreement, now called NAFTA-Plus, which has had a baby, a new preparatory planning body, with ten large planning teams, busy drawing up highly detailed blue-prints for the transition. This baby is called the Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America - SPP.

http://www.spp.gov/report_to_leaders/index.asp?dName=report_to_leaders

The US ruling class are preparing for a sudden lurch to 'unity', to partially open the borders between each country and make a more effective border around their joint countries 'against terrorism'. They are preparing for a rapid economic harmonising process: for joint financial structures, joint labour and business practices, environment agreements, safety rules in work, rail, roads, shipping, air-travel, etc; they are preparing to win the hearts and minds of the masses to the project at the right time, and so on. Whilst they are moving to open up the free flow of capital, goods, services, ownership, technology - it is labour and especially the poor of Mexico which will not be allowed free flow. Business men and wealthy 'safe' people are to get their own new fast-flow border crossings. Whilst their plans are highly detailed, they also acknowledge there are major headaches in this plan.

<http://americas.irc-online.org/am/386>

The US-Canada-Mexico bloc is described as only the first stage. At a second stage both central America and the Caribbean are to be dragged into the new bloc. A third stage is described as well down the road when the political climate has changed in South America and an All-Americas empire is projected - under US domination of course. There is also talk in SPP circles and beyond about replacing the US dollar with a North American 'Amero' (google it and see it in Wilkepedia) in some future crisis - which is not so ridiculous as it first

sounds, but this story is not for now.

THE ASIAN (CHINA-RUSSIA-INDIA) BLOC

A very similar process is occurring in Asia. Six years ago China initiated the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, SCO, and its members are China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Their leaders have been meeting in summits every year – making various economic, infrastructure and security agreements, and joint military exercises. In response to US global bullying and an awareness of US desperation, this year China has considerably stepped up the integration (and bi-national agreements) process and expansion of the SCO. Significantly SCO's recent June summit of leaders included India, Pakistan, Mongolia and, wait for it, Iran, as participating observers; and also Afghanistan, CIS and ASEAN as visitors – all with a view to membership of SCO.

<http://www.sectSCO.org/home.asp?LanguageID=2>

At their recent summit in June this year the SCO joint statements were seriously bullish about the dangers of outside interference and terrorism into Asia, without naming, but clearly fingering the US and the undemocratic nature of bodies like the IMF, World Bank, NATO, etc. SCO is rapidly developing towards a semi-common market, many more energy/oil/gas trade agreements, building regional infrastructure and much better transport links. China and Russia have already worked together in outflanking the US and EU in the energy rich central Asian countries and an oil pipeline is already up and running from Kazakhstan to west China, whilst US hopes of an oil pipeline from the Caspian through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Arabian Sea flounder in growing Afghan resistance. Russia and China have linked electricity grids with the flow to China, and they are building both gas and oil pipelines from Siberia to north China. China is making finance/capital inroads into many countries, especially oil areas in Sudan, Angola, Chad and Nigeria, but they ask their businessmen to keep this work quiet under the pre-text of 'avoiding the growth of a China-levy'. Iran, India and Pakistan have joint plans, known as IIP, for a major gas pipeline from Iran – and Iran is now making further oil/gas deals on its north-east border with Turkmenistan.

The SCO June 2006 summit of leaders made several declarations, quite blatantly stating: "The world and international relations today are going through volatile, unprecedented and profound changes. There are increasing trends towards multipolarisation and economic globalisation amid twists and turns ... SCO has outlined a new norm of international relations aiming at ensuring the equal rights for all countries worldwide ... SCO members aspire for the democratisation of international relations ... we oppose interference in other countries' internal affairs ... we safeguard each other's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity and in case of emergencies that threaten regional peace, stability and security, we will have immediate consultations and respond effectively to protect our member states ... our defence forces have already had a number of joint anti-terror military exercises and the largest-ever one is going to be staged in Russia in 2007 ... the SCO has set up seven specialist panels to study and coordinate action ... we have set up the SCO Business Council and the Interbank Association and are working on 127 joint projects covering areas of trade, investment, customs, finance, taxation, transportation, energy, agriculture, technology, telecommunications, environment, sports, culture, health and education ... we seek to enhance mutual understanding amongst member states ... the goal of the SCO in economic cooperation is to realise a free flow of goods, services, capital and technology by 2020

amongst its members [but, as with the North American project, no free flow of people and labour – SM] ... SCO holds that the next Secretary-General of the United Nations should come from Asia ... we are changing the title of the SCO Secretariat into Secretary-General ... we are now growing rapidly with stability in this global period of instability ... the next meeting of the Council of Heads of State will be held in Bishkek in 2007.”

<http://english.scosummit2006.org/>

Now, look at a map of Eurasia and you will see we are looking at a majority of humanity in one geographic area. SCO integration plans are not as advanced or detailed as the North American SPP process, but one thing clearly drawing them together is the bullying, the military and oil-controlling exploits of the US in recent times. Further, as with the European rulers, they know of the fragility of the US economy and finances. Will SCO change its name to the Asian Union in the next years? Ten years ago Russia was probing the EU with the idea of joining the EU, but they were decisively rebuffed. For the moment Putin has decisively turned to China.

<http://www.shanghaidaily.com/sco/intro.php>

WHY THE SUDDEN RUSH TO IMPERIALIST RE-DIVISION

The losses of the US globally are described above. However, there are two central economic forces driving the frantic preparations for this new re-division of the world, which would open a new era of wars and revolutions.

Firstly, and most decisively in the long run – just like it prepares its gravedigger, the proletariat – capitalism must develop the productive forces, must develop ever-larger planning for efficiency and profits, must prepare, in a twisted way, the economic socialist future within itself – that is if the competing imperialist powers are to survive against each other. Here lies the genius of Marx in fathoming out the essential contradictions and processes at the heart of societal development.

The growth of the European Union since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 provided the massive economic base to launch the euro in 1999 and successfully challenge the US-dollar as the only global reserve-currency since 1945. This has provided the example that smaller nation states can merge, remove borders, harmonise industry and services, provide a giant market – to mutual benefit and/or domination of some – and an example that it works. Increasing numbers of South American, Middle-East and African leaders are talking of copying the EU example – but these are likely arena’s of proxy-wars by the three giants. China or the US alone, in this modern world, are too small to compete unless they build ever-bigger economic production and consumer blocs – and security/military pacts.

Europe has shown that a key bourgeois argument against a world socialist federation and global planning, is that competition and wars between nations and peoples is ‘natural’, that we will not be able to cooperate – is very wrong as it happens partially in the capitalist world.

Though it must be said that amongst the big three, the EU rulers have the biggest problems with their own working class, which is dealt with later in this article.

The other, more immediate economic/financial factor driving recent urgent preparations by the US and China, is the dire state of the US financial system, in particular how over-

capacity in capitalist production – especially since 1945, first with Japan, now joined in an even bigger way by China – has led to US financial and trade-deficit mountains against these Asian giants which threatens dollar collapse, hyper-inflation and a major US recession, making the Wall Street crash of 1929 look mild by comparison.

In particular, for over 60 years, since 1945, the US-dollar has been the global reserve currency. So for 60 years the US has been able to literally print dollars, buy goods, pay for wars, mercenaries, politicians the world over, for the cost of a forest or two, printing notes to fill the vaults of banks around the world – and crucially, without affecting inflation in the US! This process increased rapidly after the 1971 refusal of the US to pay several countries gold for dollars. It was in effect a declaration of bankruptcy. The dollar then floated, divorced from its promise of gold for the dollar, and from that time the US has printed and exported dollars like there's no tomorrow. Today, just over 70% of the world's reserves, their total savings, are in US-dollars, and it is much higher in China and Japan. Dollar imperialism and semi-colonial rule is different from the direct military rule of past empires, in that every dollar abroad is pointing back in a US direction, pointing at hyper-inflation of a ferocity never before experienced. Indeed, banks the world over are currently playing 'currency-chicken', especially China and Japan. For whoever starts first in selling their dollars big-time gets the big advantage of losing least amounts of wealth as the dollar crashes. Increasingly, commentators from various political traditions are saying that in the near future there is going to be a serious run on the dollar and global chaos will ensue. See my recent article, 'Why the dollar-bubble is going to burst.'

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GreenLeft_discussion/message/29993?l=1

Certainly, the ever-increasing cyber-world of gaining giant profits from derivative and futures trading, which is completely separated from industrial capital, has postponed the US crash, as did the introduction of information technology into industrial production at an earlier phase. However, it only means the fall will be from an even higher cliff.

It should also be said, that if we are to deal effectively with the environmental crisis and global warming, it should now be clear to any green activist, that the competing imperialist blocs will contribute ever-greater to the problem. Only a democratically planned socialist world can cooperate in allowing nature the space to mend itself from the harm capitalism has done to it. Any serious green activist must recognise that the very best greens will also be red internationalists.

FUTURE TRENDS, ALLIANCES, WARS AND REVOLUTIONS

Of course if the US were to achieve unlikely successes in Iraq, discover ways to discipline Europe, China, Russia, India, Iran, Venezuela, Brasil, et-al., then the moves towards a tri-lateral imperialist world may be slowed down – but the process itself cannot now be stopped. It is no wonder that recently both the US and UK have announced major developments of both nuclear power stations and for modernising programmes for futuristic nuclear weapons – as if they could not blow up the whole world several times over right now – whilst hypocritically making war noises at Iran for wanting a nuclear energy future.

This re-division of the world is already happening, but exactly how and when matters open up more seriously between the main imperialist powers – where the fault lines will appear, weak links break, how alliances and blocs will change, where proxy wars will first explode, especially for control of oil distribution, is hard to say – it seems it has begun with the

Lebanon carnage.

A Middle East Theatre of War map produced by globalresearch.ca is very helpful and worth studying, as it shows where the oil and gas reserves are, oil pipelines, proposed pipelines, the known US air and naval bases, which have Iran almost surrounded. It does not show, however, the Kazakhstan pipeline to China, nor the four proposed pipelines to Israel from Turkey of oil, gas, electricity and water, nor the proposed Iran gas pipeline to Pakistan and India. See:

<http://globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=CHO20060726&articleId=2824>

If we project forward to a world of three openly competing main imperialist blocs, led by the US, Europe and an Asia led mainly by China, with Russia and/or India – an Orwellian 1984-type nightmare – then we could predict that the US would obviously try encourage and bully Europe to bloc with itself for control of first the Middle-East looking north towards Caspian riches. Indeed, the US, UK and Israel at this time are urgently trying to get EU countries and Turkey to provide 20,000 troops for a buffer zone in South Lebanon – with little success to date. We will soon know how this unfolds.

Such projections would see that Russia and India would be wooed by the US and EU to break from China – this is even also happening now, but with little success. Britain itself is one major fault-line having one economic foot in Europe and the other political and military foot in the US – with Scotland approaching a majority for independence. An increasingly sharply divided British ruling class would certainly open up chances for the workers and anti-war movements here. Europe as a whole does not have a unified bloc of capital to unify its bloc politically in the way China and the US can dominate their blocs. This weakens the Euro-bloc considerably and opens up the way for internal divisions induced from the other two blocs and more significant for our movement, opens up the way for serious Europe-wide working class mass resistance.

Japan becomes a major fault-line in this scenario, having geographic proximity and most of its trade with east and south-east Asia, but hopelessly tied-in with financial and political agreements and post-WWII agreements with the US: they too will be torn. Turkey too, has political ties with both the US, Israel and EU, but its population is 99% Muslim, 20% of which are Kurds in the east along its Iranian and Iraqi borders. Georgia too has politically and militarily linked up with the US and has the western BTC pipeline running through it to Turkey. But to its north, along the border with Russia are the South Ossetian and Abkhazian peoples with regional separatist leaders who want to link with Russia. Russia still refuses to obey Georgia and remove its military bases in these areas. Instead Russia ‘obeys’ the separatist leaders who want Russian troops on their land.

In a tri-polar imperialist world it seems there would be four major arena’s of proxy-wars. Firstly would be the ongoing fight for control of Middle-East/Caspian energy, which has now been kicked-off by the US. Once the US-Israel-UK axis has secured its back door, south Lebanon, which they will do, as Israel is calling up tens of thousands of reservists, whether they secure Syria first or bypass it, this imperialist axis will point to Iran. As we found out from Chussodovsky, Russia, with Syrian support is even today building a naval and air-military base at the Syrian port of Tartus.

Even before the US starts to make military moves on Iran, do not be surprised to hear that

Iran has suddenly become a full member of the fast emerging economic/military Asian bloc of the SCO. Do not be surprised if within hours Iranian TV reports will show, invited by Iran, many Russian and Chinese military aircraft landing in large numbers at Ahvaz Airport in the Khuzestan region, south-west of Iran, near Iran's main oil areas, next to the Shia populated Iraqi oil areas, near Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. But time is running short for the US as they have already lost ground to China and Russia in the oil-rich Caspian and central Asian areas. They may even land along the Bandar Abbas coastline which overlooks the narrow Strait of Hormuz where so much of the world's oil tankers must pass. These actions will be described as joint SCO exercises against 'terrorism'. However, the Chinese and Russians could establish semi-permanent military bases in the region - the consequences are almost unimaginable. The Arab and Islamic masses would rise as one against their historic enemy, US-imperialism and its puppet regimes. The danger of course is that nationalist and not class forces would come to the fore as one imperialist power is replaced with another - which is why it is so crucial for socialists to really get their act together right now.

The second area of proxy-wars must surely be South East Asia and the crucial trade and military sea routes through their region, which, has very large Islamic populations. This region, through the Association of South East Asian Nations, were guests at the SCO summit just weeks ago, with a view to joining! Australia is divided between all three blocs, in trade with South East Asia, but they are most likely to go with the US in a struggle to dominate South East Asia and its global strategic sea passages.

The third and fourth most significant areas of proxy-wars are South America and Africa. , Whilst attempting to become sub-imperialist powers - already both continents have leaders talking about unified economic markets and a unified currency like the euro - they too will be increasingly ravaged by the three dominant competing imperialisms for cheap labour and resources. The development of the left and mass resistance to neo-liberalism across Latin America holds much for the future. Which brings us to Mexico, whose ruling class is pro-US, but days ago, over 2 million people were on the streets protesting at recent elections 'fixed' by the right. The Mexican masses would look to link up with the rest of the Latin America rather than the US.

South Korea, Taiwan, Cuba, even Greenland, all too have geographic economic and political dislocations. Frankly, this type of discussion of future trends could go on forever.

Of course the US may back down from trying to control Iran and its oil as things get militarily worse for themselves. The heat will temporarily cool a little but not for long. Germany and France may try to keep the EU out of either the US or Asian camps. Whilst Europe has a partially common culture with the US, it is important to note its geographical unity in Eurasia. It is not impossible to imagine France, invited by Iran, to also put a military base on its land if China and Russia did it first.

Whatever happens, it is the Marxist method when used correctly, which gives the workers and socialist movement the advantage being able to understand this period we are in, of pointing to likely trends and scenarios, of being able to orient ourselves and prepare for future events. The tempo of capitalism today indicates that any lurch into an imperialist World War III may not be far behind, or even happen alongside global re-division - unless stopped by the world's masses alongside the rapid development of a new mass workers' International.

Whilst much of the above describes the crisis of capitalism and its rivalries, only the workers, youth, anti-war and anti-capitalist masses can end forever the atrocities of capitalism with the rapid building of a new workers' International, which is capable of leading the fight to world socialism.

In this coming period our class the world over will be forced to fight tooth and nail against drastic reductions in wages, conditions, rights, welfare and benefits – as the capitalists try to make the workers and poor pay for their wars and indeed for our class to be the soldiers being killed in those wars. The buffer between the ruling and working classes in developed countries, the buying-off sections of skilled workers since 1945, will certainly be largely removed in the next period.

As millions of us surge into action against wars, injustice and attacks on our class, the left must right now prepare unified democratic working class parties in every country for the masses to flow into. Of necessity these parties will have to be multi-tendency with full rights for differences to be expressed, but we must develop as fast as possible, unity in action. The bulk of the existing left will have to shake-off the routinism of its activities built during the relative tranquility since 1945 to the present. The left will also have to shake-off the understandably developed catastrophobia that has plagued so many of its brains. If the left remains tied to the coat-tails of the pro-capitalist anti neo-liberal academics, as many currently are, if the old left does not turn to the inspiration of the mass radicalisation of workers, peasants and youth, then large sections of the left may will act as a brake on their political development. The existing left is going to polarise in this coming period, in what proportions is hard to say – as we have never been in this situation before.

The most clear-sighted Marxists, will fight tooth and nail for our new workers' International to be decisively revolutionary in character and develop a new programme of action related to the new times, and, in my opinion, will name itself the Fifth International, taking forward with us all the rich positive experience from the previous four Internationals, but also the lessons behind their weaknesses and defeats. To young comrades I would urge you to take on board three suggestions from Lenin to youth during WWI, “study, study and more study”. This is a fight that our class can win before too much of humanity is slaughtered, but if we fail this time we do face a barbarism, environmental destruction and a nuclear holocaust of unfathomable consequences for humanity.

Steve Masterson, is not a member of any group or party, but when living in Scotland, acted as a revolutionary Marxist member of the SSP. I now see the workers party tactic should be applied in the struggle for a united fighting English Socialist Party, uniting all the left groups and also the Labour left. Steve Masterson has set up an open discussion list on the issue of Imperialist Re-Division at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/newW-Int/>

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