

# U.S. Imperial Wars: Militarism in West Asia and the Horn of Africa: The Need for Antiwar Solidarity

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Many of the wars waged by United States imperialism around the world remain largely hidden from people inside the country.

This represents a challenge for the antiwar and anti-imperialist movements in North America which are grappling with how to move forward amid a national presidential and congressional election which has failed to address any substantial issues domestic and international.

Politics in the U.S. has always been infused with efforts to project the virtue or lack thereof of people seeking public office. This has been true more so in regard to the competitions for the White House. As it relates to Congress during 2016 there is almost no focus on the race for these political positions which can also determine the character of the debate and policy decisions over the next two to four years.

A recent article published in the New York Times on Monday October 24, went almost unnoticed by those involved in campaigning for Hillary Clinton. Two leading African American congresspersons were criticizing the Democratic Party for not providing any real assistance in important congressional elections. The outcome of these contests could be critical in the tenure of a potential Clinton presidency.

This article by Jonathan Martin says in the October 24 edition,

“At issue is a strategic choice with profound implications: Should Mrs. Clinton reach to defeat Mr. Trump in more states like Utah? Or should she instead divert some of her resources to Democrats who are battling in tight races in liberal states like New York and centrist states like Colorado, where she is assured of victory or in Republican-leaning states like Indiana and Missouri that she has effectively written off? As Mrs. Clinton confidently expands her campaign into conservative-leaning states, she should make the knife’s-edge fight for the Senate and the Democratic effort to cut into the Republicans’ House majority a priority, said the lawmakers, Representatives James E. Clyburn of South Carolina and G. K. Butterfield of North Carolina.”

This same report continues noting that “She may be in a good place, but I don’t think the party is in a good place yet,” said Mr. Clyburn, the third-ranking House Democrat. Mr. Butterfield, noting that the party’s ‘down-ballot races are not as comfortable as the presidential race,” added:

“I’m concerned about the African-American vote. We’ve got to get a turnout in the African-American community that equals or surpasses the white turnout.’ Mr. Clyburn and Mr. Butterfield, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, said they had taken their pleas in recent days to senior officials in Mrs. Clinton’s campaign and received respectful hearings but no firm commitments.”

As the domestic race for presidential and congressional offices remains obscured and distorted in personality conflicts and allegations of scandal, so is the burning international questions from the Caribbean and Latin America through the turmoil now prevalent in Europe surrounding the migration issue, to the African continent where the imperialists are intensifying their presence through the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), into Palestine where the people still are not free, and into West Asia and the Asia-Pacific where the Pentagon has pivoted over the last several years.

### **The Situation in Yemen, Syria and Western Asia**

Over the last 19 months there has been a war raging in the Middle Eastern state of Yemen. The Pentagon through the Saudi Arabian and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has been bombing daily the poorest state in the region, Yemen. Approximately 10,000 people have been killed, mainly civilians.

The Saudi-GCC Coalition utilizes U.S.-made fighter jets, bombs, refueling technology and shared intelligence. Diplomatic cover provided by the State Department serves to justify the bombing saying that the source of the problem is the Ansurallah Movement (Houthis) who are aligned with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Ansurallah is a Shite-based group and represents the anti-imperialist character of the movement across several countries including Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and other states. U.S. foreign policy at present is faced with a dilemma of not only targeting the popular Shite-led organizations but to also seek to control the destabilization that their intervention over the last twenty-five years has engendered.

Syria represents an independent anti-imperialist state which supports the national liberation struggle of the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. The Syrian state is a multi-national, multi-ethnic and pluralist religious society. It appears that such a political orientation does not fit into the program of dominance and exploitation which the forces in Washington and Wall Street desire.

The overthrow of the governments of Afghanistan during the 1980s, Iraq in the early 2000s, and Libya in 2011, has brought about social chaos not only in Tripoli and Benghazi and other regions of the North African state but also throughout this region and West Africa. Any state where the military has intervened in national politics they have been trained by the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

In Mali during 2012, an officer who staged a military coup was trained in several defense academies in the U.S. The overthrow of the civilian government in Mali only enhanced the instability providing a rationale for French intervention which has been aided by the Pentagon since early 2013.

The anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. must rally to the defense of the people of Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iran and Libya. Anything less than maximum solidarity in this period where both political parties are dominated by the theory of “American Exceptionalism” would be irresponsible based upon what is demanded of the period.

## The Horn of Africa: Destabilized and Militarized by Imperialism



At present in several Horn of Africa states the political situation is growing tense. All of these countries have experienced Pentagon, State Department and CIA involvement over the last three decades.

In Somalia, the country is being bombed on a weekly basis under the guise of fighting “Islamic terrorism.” Yet despite the billions of dollars in western military assistance that have been utilized over the last decade, the country is still not stable. A U.S.-EU funded African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), 22,000 strong, has been inside Somalia since 2007 having failed to win the hearts and minds of the people.

Neighboring Ethiopia is undergoing mass demonstrations by disaffected national groups such as the Oromo and Amharic who feel they have been disenfranchised since the collapse of the socialist-oriented government of Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1991. Over the last quarter-century, the U.S. State Department has welded tremendous influence in Ethiopian foreign policy. This has been reflected as well in the domestic investment policy which has been a focus of attacks over the last several weeks prompting the declaration of a “state of emergency.”

In neighboring Djibouti, the Pentagon maintains a growing military base at Camp Lemoneir which is serving as a staging ground for operations in both Africa and West Asia. AFRICOM is building air strips and impromptu bases in numerous regions throughout the continent.

These are some of the issues that we will have to work on before and after the November 8 elections. The capitalist system is not being debated in the upcoming poll. What is being discussed is the maintenance of the status-quo meaning that the fundamental situation will not be altered without the intervention of the workers and nationally oppressed.

This is the task before us and we are committed to making our contribution to the peoples’ struggle against global dominance and exploitation by the imperialist system.

*The above comments were made on Saturday October 29, 2016 at a Workers World Party campaign rally held in Detroit. Other speakers included Martha Grevatt of the UAW; Randi Nord, a youth activist from Oakland County; and Lamont Lilly, WWP Vice-Presidential candidate from North Carolina. The meeting was chaired by Joe Mshahwar of the youth organization Detroit Fight Imperialism Stand Together (FIST).*

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