

United States Continues Imperialist Policies Despite COVID-19 Pandemic

Bombings in Somalia and the intensification of destabilization efforts against Venezuela, Zimbabwe and Iran further exposes the Trump administration war crimes

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Global Research, April 02, 2020

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#), [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Countries throughout the globe are focusing on the eradication of the COVID-19 pandemic which has infected nearly a million people and killed over 45,000.

During the early phase of the detection of the virus in the People's Republic of China, the United States administration of **President Donald Trump** dismissed the threat of COVID-19 and refused to implement emergency measures on a national scale.

By early April, the crisis was evident for all to witness. Millions were rendered unemployed in the U.S. where the official propaganda of the state and corporate community is that the economy was expanding at a rapid rate with no threat of recession.

At present the threat of another Great Depression on the scale, or exceeding, the downturn of 1929-1941, which only mass resistance and the implementation of the New Deal were able to ameliorate during the 1930s, is within the realm of possibility. It was only the advent of the second imperialist war of 1939-1945 which pulled the U.S. out of the Depression.

On a domestic level with the U.S. discourse very much centered on the level of benefits being given to various sectors within the economy as relates to the \$2.2 trillion stimulus package approved by Congress and the president, while the role of foreign affairs has escaped public scrutiny. Healthcare workers, rightly concerned, are demanding personal protection equipment to prevent the outbreak from further spreading among physicians, nurses and other employees.

The bulk of the allocations mandated by the stimulus package will go towards maintaining the profitability of the largest corporations in the world. Undoubtedly, millions living inside this country will suffer social and healthcare challenges for months if not years to come.

However, on an international level, the Pentagon and State Department are continuing their imperialist policies towards the nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America. These military and economic attacks on various geo-political regions defy the general international atmosphere of seeking cooperation in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

United Nations **Secretary General Antonio Guterres** made an appeal to all those involved in military conflicts around the world to immediately ceasefire. The motivating

factor in his statement was designed to mobilize all necessary resources to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guterres said in a statement on March 23 that:

“The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war.

That is why today, I am calling for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. It is time to put armed conflict on lock-down and focus together on the true fight of our lives.... It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives. Silence the guns; stop the artillery; end the airstrikes.” (See [this](#))

Nonetheless, the White House has not announced any disengagement or withdrawal initiatives related to the numerous military actions the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are involved in around the globe. Quite to the contrary, nations such as Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, among others, remain under active threat by Washington.

Bombing Operations in Somalia amid Intensified Attacks on Iran, Venezuela and Zimbabwe

The U.S. has been interfering in the internal affairs of the Horn of Africa nation of Somalia for many decades. Numerous aerial strikes have been conducted against Somalia for more than a decade.

In recent weeks, many Somalians condemned an airstrike which killed civilians under the guise of anti-terrorism operations during February. These purportedly precision bombings often massacre people who are designated as “terrorists” by the Pentagon. In Somalia there is an ongoing guerrilla conflict between the al-Shabaab Islamist organization which Washington claims is backed by Al-Qaeda and the U.S. supported Federal Government based in the capital of Mogadishu.

Consequently, any attack is justified by claiming that the targets of these unannounced bombings are terrorists. The U.S. is backing thousands of African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) troops who have been inside Somalia since the late 2000s. AMISOM is in Somalia to provide security for the central government in Mogadishu. Irrespective of AMISOM’s presence, the efforts to eliminate al-Shabaab have not been successful. In addition, to providing weapons and training for AMISOM and the Federal Government in Mogadishu, the Pentagon has deployed soldiers from the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).

An article published on the Intercept website says of the Somalia situation:

“A U.S. Africa Command press release issued the day of the strike near Janaale, a town about 60 miles south of the Somali capital Mogadishu, said that five ‘terrorists’ were killed and that there were no civilian casualties. But Farhan Mahmoud Mohammed, a resident of Janaale who spoke to The Intercept by phone last Friday (March 13), told a different story. Mohammed’s 13-year-old son Abdi Farhan Mahmoud was on his way to school when a U.S. missile struck a mini-bus taxi he was riding in. Mahmoud was decapitated in the strike, his father said. He could hardly bear to look at the boy’s charred face. Another

passenger in the minibus, 70-year-old Abdirahman Ali Waadhoor, was also killed in the attack, according to his son Abdullahi Abdirahman Ali. 'My father is a disabled man. He never had a problem with anyone.' said Ali, who lives in London and saw pictures of his father's corpse on his phone." (See [this](#))

In response to the criticism of the airstrikes in Somalia, AFRICOM is now saying they will provide a quarterly report on civilian casualties. Such a statement implies that the military operations in Somalia will continue indefinitely.



AFRICOM in the Sahel

The South American state of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been targeted for regime-change for over two decades since the beginning of the Revolution. 2019 saw a heightening of destabilization efforts against the administration of President Nicolas Maduro when an opposition figure with a questionable following was recognized as the head-of-state by the U.S. and its allies.

On April 1, there were reports of the deployment of a U.S. Naval warship being deployed close to the Caribbean shores of Venezuela ostensibly to guard against the trafficking in illegal drugs. Without any evidence the U.S. government has charged President Maduro with being involved in the importation of cocaine into the country.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been an epicenter for the spread of COVID-19. Yet the Trump administration maintains draconian sanctions against the Middle Eastern nation preventing the government from acquiring much needed medications and healthcare equipment.

Members of Congress have sent a letter to the State Department calling for the lifting of sanctions against Tehran. An article published by [Press TV](#) reported that:

“In a letter sent on Tuesday (March 31) to US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, over 30 members of Congress — including Senators Bernie Sanders and Edward J. Markey as well as Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar — urged the Trump administration to step in with humanitarian aid rather than worsening the situation.”

Language from the letter says:

“Rather than continue to invoke new sanctions in the Iranian people’s hour of need, we urge you to substantially suspend sanctions on Iran during this global public health emergency in a humanitarian gesture to the Iranian people to better enable them to fight the virus. Additionally, we encourage the US to find a way to deliver aid directly to the Iranian people to support the Iranian people’s fight against Coronavirus. By targeting an entire economy that supports more than 80 million people, US sanctions make it harder for ordinary Iranians to obtain basic necessities like food and hygienic supplies essential to stemming the pandemic and that are basic to survival.”

In the Southern African nation of Zimbabwe the U.S., Britain, the European Union (EU) and their allies imposed sanctions against this country some twenty years ago. Recently the UN Secretary General appealed to the imperialist states to lift sanctions against Harare.

The state-run [Herald newspaper reported](#) on April 1 noting:

“Government has welcomed recent calls by top United Nations officials for the removal of sanctions on Zimbabwe and other countries in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic that is ravaging the world. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet last week called on the international community, principally the US, to roll back sanctions imposed on many countries, with Zimbabwe being one of them. They said such embargoes were hampering the fight against the pandemic that has so far killed over 36,000 people and infected at least 800, 000 worldwide.”

The Struggle Against COVID-19 is an Anti-Imperialist Effort

Consequently, the U.S. ruling class cannot argue honestly that it is seriously committed to battling the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing its war policies around the world. Any escalation of military interventions will only worsen the overall global health situation.

Progressive forces in the U.S. must condemn these acts of destabilization and conflict engineered by Washington. Only the revolutionary transformation of capitalist society can provide long term solutions to the problems of the world.

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Featured image: AMISOM troops occupying Somalia from Uganda; all images in this article are from the author

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