

US Crimes Against Humanity at Home and Abroad

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*This month marks the second year since former President of Bolivia, **Evo Morales**, announced to the world a campaign promoted by a group of Latin American writers and academics to declare August 9 as International Day of US Crimes against Humanity. Appropriately the day is to remember the second nuclear bomb dropped in 1945 on Nagasaki Japan that came just 3 days after the first nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.*

Imagine how depraved and cold blooded the then Democratic President Truman could be to find that he had incinerated 150,000 people on one day and turned right around and did it again in Nagasaki instantly killing 65,000 more human beings. US historical accounts love to turn truth on its head by saying how many lives those nuclear bombs saved when Japan was already defeated before the bombs were dropped after 67 Japanese cities had been leveled to the ground by relentless US aerial fire bombings.



The people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were sacrificed as an exclamation point on a proclamation to the world announcing the arrival of the US as the world's new pre eminent super power. **It also served as an example that the US would commit any murderous crime of any proportion to maintain that imperial position of dominance** and they have demonstrated that to be true time and time again. Even now in decline the US has never apologized for this unnecessary crime because that could convey a sign of weakness and a step back from a policy of nuclear blackmail held over the nations of the world. Obama had the chance to do that in the final year of his presidency when he had nothing to lose in a 2016 visit to Hiroshima. Instead of apologizing to the people of Japan or easing tensions in the world Obama, in eloquent fluffy double talk, said, "Mere words cannot give voice to such suffering. But we have a shared responsibility to look directly into the eye of history and ask what we must do differently to curb such suffering again."

The responsibility for the majority of suffering in the world was then and continues to be, on an imperialist policy and its inherent neo liberal engine that violently throttles the ability of countries to develop in a way that would bring health and prosperity for the benefit of their

majorities. In the end it is an unsustainable system that only benefits a sliver of privileged society.

The US crimes against humanity did not begin or end with the dropping of the nuclear bombs on Japan. As militant civil rights leader **Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin** (formerly H. Rap Brown) pointed out years ago, "Violence is as American as cherry pie." Since its inception the US has been ingrained with a motor force of violent oppression against everyone and every country that stood in its way of its expansion for control of resources and its entitlement to limitless accumulation of vast wealth for a few.

The original thirteen colonies that rebelled against England were not motivated solely by being taxed without representation but more for the restrictions that King George had placed on the unbridled greed of the white settlers to expand and steal the lands of the indigenous nations and communities and to establish a system of slavery which was the main source of capitalist accumulation especially for the southern colonies. At the time of the revolution close to 20% of the population consisted of Black slaves. Slavery actually ran contrary to British Common Law so the only way the emerging class of landowners in the colonies could flourish was to secede from the British Empire. In doing so it established a pivotal component of the original DNA of the United States; structural racism as a means to justify any level of discrimination and oppression with a deeply embedded belief in the inferiority of any race not white and Christian. The cries of **Black Lives Matter** in the streets today of all the major cities and towns of the US are a resounding echo of resistance that comes from the plantations and the slave ships that came from Africa.

The genocide of indigenous people in the US was its initial crime wave against humanity as it expanded westward destined by God to exercise their Manifest Destiny. The early history of this country is littered with hundreds of massacres of the original caretakers of the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific. And that crime continues to this day with Native Americans suffering from the highest infection rates of Covid-19 in the country as a direct result of government neglect and broken treaties that keeps the reservations in grinding poverty including in many areas where there is not even running water.

On July 21 Congress passed a \$740 billion military appropriations bill, the biggest ever and \$2 billion more than last year. The United States spends more on national defense than the next 11 largest militaries combined. A well intended but feeble attempt by sections of the Democratic Party to cut 10% of the budget to go to health and human services failed because ultimately funding the 800 US military installations that occupy territory in more than 70 countries around the world takes precedence over something so basic and human as subsidized food programs. Meanwhile approximately 20% of the families in this country are struggling to obtain nutritious food every day just as one example of the growing social and health needs.

Wars and occupations are expensive and that money goes right down the drain. It does not recycle through the economy rather it is equipment and operations meant to destroy and terrorize and the only part of it that is re used is the militarization of police forces in the US who are geared out in advanced equipment for the wars at home not even normally seen in theaters of war abroad.

When Obama took over from Bush junior he vowed to end the war in Afghanistan and instead left office with the unique distinction of having had a war going everyday of his 8

years in office. He launched airstrikes or military raids in at least seven countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan and Trump came in and did not miss a beat and has carried the war of death, destruction and destabilization of Afghanistan into its twentieth year. The Pentagon knows that the days of outright winning a war are over and relies now on hybrid wars that are perhaps even more criminal. It is now wars of attrition with proxy and contract armies, aerial bombardment, sabotage of infrastructure that turns into endless wars that's intent is to make sure that a country is imbalanced, exhausted and does not become independent or develop and use its resources for the benefit of its own people.

This of course is not the only type of criminal warfare in the Empire's arsenal. **Economic sanctions are just as much a crime against humanity as military attacks.** No one should ever forget the 10 years of the US orchestrated UN sanctions against Iraq in the 1990's that were responsible for the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children. Primarily through executive order Trump has put some sort of sanctions on around one third of the countries of the world ranging in severity starting with the 60 year old unilateral blockade of Cuba for the crime of insisting on its sovereignty just 90 miles away, to the sanctioning of medicines and food to Venezuela causing the deaths of 40,000 people, the outright stealing of billions of dollars of their assets out of banks and organizing coup plots against the democratically elected President, **Nicolas Maduro.**

Now the chickens have come to roost with Trump sending shadowy military units of federal agents into cities like Portland, Seattle and other cities like it was a military invasion of some poor country, barging in uninvited not to bring order and peace but to brutalize, escalate and provoke people in the streets who for months now have been demanding real justice and equality. The combination of the failure of the Trump Administration to confront the pandemic with any sort of will or a national science based plan, the existing economic crisis with its glaring separation of wealth and the endless murdering of people of color as normal police policy has exposed the system like never before. The growing consciousness of a majority of the US population that now seem to be getting that there has to be fundamental change will be the catalyst for real change to happen. It will not come from a government that does not reflect their interests but only through a unity of struggle will we be pointed in a direction that will push US crimes against humanity, at home and abroad, to become a thing of the past.

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Bill Hackwell and **Alicia Jrapko** are members of the US chapter of the Network in Defense of Humanity.

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