

Special
Edition

THIS IS NOT A DRILL

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*Dedicated to Abolishing War, Establishing Justice, and Fighting Climate Disaster
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AMLO: Trying to Get Free from the U.S.'s Imperial Grip

By Medea Benjamin

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador is wildly popular among Mexicans at home and abroad. It's not just because of his domestic policies; he is also playing a key role in challenging U.S. dominance in Latin America.

When the Mexican president traveled to Washington, DC, on July 12, his most exciting encounter for Mexicans in both the United States and Mexico was not his meeting with President Joe Biden but his impromptu encounter with well-wishers outside his hotel room at the Lombardy. Some had driven from places like Chicago and New York City just to get a glimpse of their president.

The video of the encounter, which must have been a nightmare for the Secret Service protecting him, went



Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador

viral. It showed the president (known by his initials AMLO) sticking his head out the window, blowing kisses, catching a bouquet of flowers thrown to him, and being serenaded by mariachis singing the song “Amigo” (“You are my soul brother, a friend that in every way and day is always with me”).

AMLO showered them with praise, thanking them for their sacrifice of coming to the United States and working hard in order to send money back to their families in

Mexico. “You are heroes and heroines,” he said, with a huge grin. “Our economy is rising because of what you send to your relatives. You are exceptional migrants. I love you very much.” He shared with them his plans to meet with President Biden and push for immigration reforms so that they could come and go legally. The adoring crowd below shouted back, “We love you, President, we are with you.”

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Roger Waters:

Why I Must Speak Out



Iconic rocker on why he stands for freedom and justice

This article, published in 2014, remains just as relevant today.—The Editors

By Roger Waters

Seventy years ago, my father—2nd Lt. Eric Fletcher Waters—died in Italy fighting the Nazis. He was a committed pacifist, and a conscientious objector at the start of the war, but as Hitler's crimes spread across Europe, he swapped the ambulance he had driven through the London blitz for a tin hat and a commission in the Royal Fusiliers and he joined the fight against fascism. He was killed near Aprilia in the battle for the Anzio Bridgehead on Feb. 18, 1944. My mother—Mary Duncan Waters—spent the rest of her life politically active, striving always to ensure that her children, and everyone else's children, had no Sword of Damocles in the form of the despised Nazi Creed or any other despicable creed hanging over their heads.

Thanks to the good people of Aprilia and Anzio, I was able to pay tribute to the father I never knew by unveiling a memorial in the town where he died and laying a

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Dec.16, 2010: Mike Ferner being arrested for civil resistance at the White House protesting U.S. wars. Photo: Ellen Davidson

Editorial

There Is No Planet B

By Mike Ferner

In his 1833 State of the Union address to Congress, President Andrew Jackson, arguably the worst U.S. President from the perspective of Native Americans, said, “That those tribes cannot exist surrounded by our settlements and in con-

tinual contact with our citizens is certain. Established in the midst of another and a superior race, and without appreciating the causes of their inferiority or seeking to control them, they must necessarily yield to the force of circumstances and ere long disappear.”

Given how Jackson and North Ameri-

can culture treated the first people to occupy their continent, one could imagine that some native people took comfort from what Gandhi wrote in 1908 in Hind

bending a growing number of governments to their will. Every day our personal experience shows us this is not a drill.

As military veterans, we are very familiar with drills. And we are very familiar with how it feels when your blood runs cold at the words, “This is not a drill!” That’s why you’ll often find Veterans For Peace members in the streets, on picket lines, calling out elected officials and getting arrested for civil disobedience.

In fact, we particularly relish what a beloved VFP member, historian Howard Zinn, once wrote:

“Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience. Our problem is that people all over the world have obeyed the dictates of leaders ... and millions have been killed because of this obedience. ... Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world in the face of poverty and starvation and stupidity, and war, and cruelty. Our problem is that people are obedient while the jails are full of petty thieves ... (and) the grand thieves are running the country. That’s our problem.”

That’s the sense of urgency we continually try to get across to our fellow citizens at every opportunity. And those attending the Roger Waters “This Is Not A Drill” concert can add immensely to achieving a critical mass.

You already know this is not a drill. You already know we are not just under threat; that our home really is on fire; that there is no Planet B.

The time for polite rehearsals and standard tactics is long gone. Think about what

Think about what it will take to save our Mother Earth and just do it. Do it with abandon. ... Do it simply out of love and because it’s the right thing to do. ... Do it because this is not a drill.

Swaraj, “Western civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed.”

Prophetic words, indeed. But the climate crisis was unknown in 1908 and Gandhi had no way to foresee today’s ongoing mass extinction event, the only one in the planet’s history caused by the greed of just one species.

Friend, the signs are visible all around us: acidic, rising seas rout millions who have fewer places to go as deserts expand. Even in temperate zones, summers become intolerable and ice disappears. Famine pursues the multiplying wildfires and droughts. Fascists are not only on the march but

it will take to save our Mother Earth and just do it. Do it with abandon. Do it because there is richness and solidarity and joy to be found in the doing. Do it simply out of love and because it’s the right thing to do. The world will be the better for it regardless of how much time our species may have. Do it because this is not a drill.

Mike Ferner served as a Navy hospital corpsman during the American War in Vietnam. He is a past president of Veterans For Peace and is the senior editor of Peace & Planet News. He is the author of Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran for Peace Reports from Iraq.



Photo: Ellen Davidson

Veterans For Peace is an international organization made up of military veterans, military family members, and allies. We are dedicated to building a culture of peace, exposing the true causes and costs of war, and healing the wounds of war.



For more information or to join or support our work, scan the QR at left or visit veteransforpeace.org.

Peace & Planet News

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No Hay Planeta B

Por Mike Ferner

En su discurso sobre el Estado de la Unión de 1833 ante el Congreso, el presidente Andrew Jackson, posiblemente el peor presidente de los EE. UU. desde la perspectiva de los nativos americanos, dijo que sus tribus no podían existir “establecidas en medio de otra raza superior” y que pronto tendrían que desaparecer.

Después de siglos de tal brutalidad, quizás algunos nativos se sintieron consolados con lo que Gandhi escribió en 1908, que “la civilización occidental es tal que uno solo tiene que ser paciente y se autodestruirá”. si considera la crisis climática actual y la amenaza de las armas nucleares, las palabras de Gandhi fueron verdaderamente proféticas.

Amigos, las señales están a nuestro alrededor: los mares en ascenso exilian a millones que pueden encontrar menos

Piense en lo que se necesitará para salvar a nuestra Madre Tierra y simplemente hágalo.

lugares a donde ir a medida que los desiertos se expanden. Los veranos se vuelven intolerables. El hielo desaparece. El hambre sigue a la multiplicación de los incendios forestales y las sequías. El fascismo ya no es solo un término en los libros de historia.

Todos los días, nuestra experiencia personal nos muestra que no estamos bajo una vaga amenaza. Nuestra casa realmente está en llamas y no hay un Planeta B.

Los miembros de Veteranos por la Paz están muy familiarizados con los simulacros y hemos sentido que se nos hela la

sangre al escuchar las palabras “¡esto no es un simulacro!” Es por eso que a menudo nos encontrarán en las calles, en las huelgas, llamando a funcionarios electos y siendo arrestados por desobediencia civil.

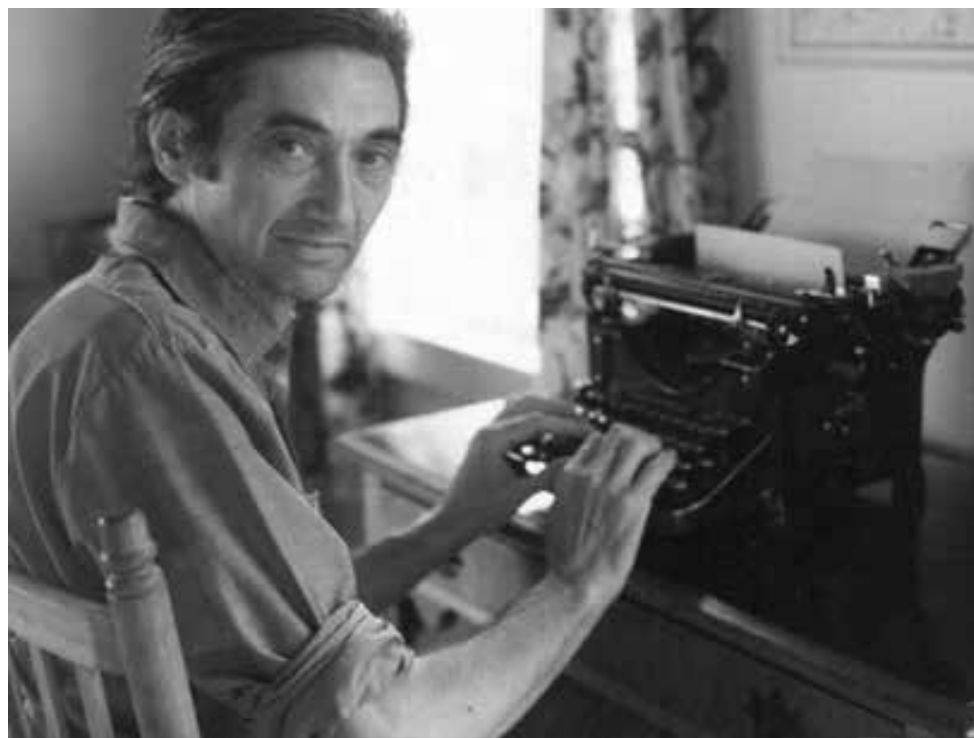
De hecho, nos deleitamos particularmente con lo que un compañero miembro de VFP, el historiador Howard Zinn, escribió una vez: “La desobediencia civil no es nuestro problema. Nuestro problema es la obediencia civil. Nuestro problema es que la gente en todo el mundo ha obedecido los dictados de los líderes... y millones han sido asesinados a causa de esta obediencia... Nuestro problema es que la gente en todo el mundo es obediente frente a la pobreza, y al hambre, y a la estupidez, y a la guerra, y a la crueldad. Nuestro problema es que la gente es obediente mientras que las cárceles están llenas de ladronzuelos... (y) los grandes ladrones gobiernan el país. Ese es nuestro problema”.

Ese es el sentido de urgencia que tratamos de comunicar a nuestros conciudadanos en cada oportunidad. Y todos los que asistan a un concierto de Roger Waters pueden ayudar a comunicar ese sentido de urgencia.

El tiempo para los ensayos corteses y las tácticas estándares se ha ido. Piense en lo que se necesitará para salvar a nuestra Madre Tierra y simplemente hágalo. Hazlo con abandono. Háganlo porque hay riqueza, solidaridad y alegría en hacerlo. Hazlo simplemente por amor y porque es lo correcto. El mundo será mejor sin importar cuánto tiempo pueda tener nuestra especie. Hazlo porque esto no es un simulacro.

Traducido en español por Zorailyn Martinez.

Mike Ferner es un ex-presidente de Veterans For Peace que se desempeñó como ayudante médico del hospital de la Marina durante la Guerra estadounidense en Vietnam. El es editor de Peace & Planet News y autor de Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran for Peace Reports from Iraq.



Howard Zinn.



Letter to President Biden: 'Enough Is Enough—War Is Not The Answer'

Dear President Biden,

I am writing you as a proud member of Veterans For Peace and its former president. We have been following the war in Ukraine closely, since well before the Russian invasion on Feb. 24 of this year. We were alarmed when you and President Obama supported the regime-change coup in Ukraine in 2014, which was openly cheered on by the State Department's Victoria Nuland, and spearheaded by self-described Nazis.

We watched in horror as those same

Former Veterans For Peace president urges negotiations, not escalation.

self-described Nazis set fire to an Odessa union building full of Ukrainians who were protesting a new law outlawing the Russian language as an official language of Ukraine. Fifty people were burned alive or shot and beaten to death. This in a country with a long history with Russia and millions of Russian speakers.

Appalled at the aforementioned atrocities, the Russian-speaking population of the Donbass in Eastern Ukraine declared their independence from Ukraine, and were soon attacked by Nazi militias. These self-described Nazi militias were then incorporated into the Ukrainian army, and the attacks continued. By the time that Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24 of this year, 14,000 Ukrainians had already been killed in that terrible civil war.

Russian President Vladimir Putin repeatedly warned and almost begged the U.S. and NATO: Do not push your hostile military forces any further onto Russia's borders. Taking Ukraine into NATO would cross a serious “red line.” Russian troops then massed along the border with Ukraine, in a clear show of force.

Mr. President, you might have stopped this war from happening merely by announc-

ing that Ukraine would not become part of NATO and that you would end the militarization of Ukraine. You could have accepted President Putin's offer to negotiate a new security arrangement in Europe. We looked on in disbelief as you rather cavalierly brushed aside Russia's legitimate concerns. It looked like you were saying, “Bring it on!”

Well, Russia brought it on. We were horrified by the Russian invasion as well as by your response. You armed Ukraine to the teeth and fanned the flames of war. Ukraine (and the Black Market in Europe) is now awash with high-tech U.S. weaponry. A full-on war has killed many thousands of civilians, made millions homeless, and destabilized much of the world. We are now facing economic disasters and fearing the all-too-real possibility of nuclear war. Why?

As veterans who have experienced the carnage of war, we are concerned about the young soldiers on both sides who are being killed and injured in the tens of thousands. We know all too well that the survivors will be traumatized and scarred for life. These are additional reasons why the Ukraine war must end now.

We ask you to listen to veterans who say “Enough is Enough—War Is Not the Answer.” We want urgent, good faith diplomacy to end the war in Ukraine, not more U.S. weapons, advisors, and endless war. And certainly not a nuclear war.

It is not too late to do avoid further disaster, Mr. President. It is never too late to do the right thing. Show us a Profile of Courage and save the world from World War III, a war that could literally destroy human civilization as we know it. You must distance yourself from the neocons and weapons manufacturers who are giving you terrible advice. You must reverse course now. Drop the weapons and embrace diplomacy. For the sake of Ukraine. For the sake Russia, Europe and the United States. For the sake of the all the peoples of the world.

Negotiate, don't escalate!

—Gerry Condon

Gerry Condon is the former president of Veterans For Peace and a co-author of the Veterans For Peace Nuclear Posture Review.

AMLO

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According to a poll released in early July, the dozens who gathered below the hotel window represent millions of Mexicans. It showed AMLO with a 66% approval rating, one of the highest of all world leaders. This despite the myriad problems that continue to plague the nation: inflation, corruption, violence.

AMLO has plenty of detractors. Critics from the right condemn his populist economic policies, such as the nationalization of lithium. They say he has centralized power and does not tolerate dissent. On the left, critics say he is complicit with repressive U.S. immigration policies, has reneged on his promises to defend indigenous rights, and hasn't done enough to stop the horrific wave of femicides and attacks on journalists.

But his fans see him as a man of the people who rode to power on Dec. 1, 2018, with an overwhelming mandate to break with the corrupt parties that had ruled Mexico for almost a century. One of his first acts was to cut his own salary by half and slash the wages of most other top officials. He put the extravagant presidential plane up for sale, preferring to travel in economy class on commercial flights.

He has also offered asylum to jailed whistleblower Julian Assange and recently suggested that the Statue of Liberty should be dismantled and returned to France if Assange is extradited and imprisoned in the United States.

He opened up the former presidential residence to the public, allowing millions of Mexicans and tourists to enjoy the palatial home and gardens.

Another reason for the president's popularity is the extraordinary effort he puts into communicating with the public—perhaps more than any other leader in the world. From the day he took office, he has been holding marathon press conferences from Monday to Friday, starting at 7 am and lasting for two or three hours. Called “La Mañanera,” the conferences are broadcast live on public television and streamed on a dedicated YouTube channel, as well as directly on the president's official website. The president's office estimates that an astounding 10 million people watch the program.

Unlike scripted press events in the United States, these are free-flowing discussions where the president talks in a folksy style about everything from COVID-19, infrastructure projects, and the migrant crisis to Mexico's best foods and the cheapest places to buy gasoline. He speaks in a slow, conversational tone, breaking down political jargon into digestible concepts and taking unscripted questions from the press.

Claiming that the mainstream media often misinform the public or ignore key issues, AMLO ironically uses these press



Extraordinary effort to communicate with the public: Every weekday, AMLO broadcasts live press conferences called ‘La Mañanera.’

conferences to bypass the media and take his message directly to the people. His open style represents a fundamental break with the past, where presidents went for years without taking an unvetted question from a reporter.

But AMLO is more than just a popular Mexican president; he has become a leading progressive figure in the Americas.

He has garnered support and gratitude for bold actions he has taken in solidarity with beleaguered leftist leaders and nations. After the Organization of American States (OAS) sparked a coup against Evo Morales in 2019, AMLO sent a plane to whisk Morales out of the country and offer him asylum in Mexico. Morales credits AMLO with saving his life.

He has also offered asylum to jailed whistleblower Julian Assange and recently suggested that the Statue of Liberty should be dismantled and returned to France if Assange is extradited and imprisoned in the United States.

A close friend of Cuba, AMLO sent much-needed shipments of food, medicine, and fuel to the island during the height of the pandemic and announced in May 2022 that Mexico would hire more than 500 Cuban doctors to help make up for a shortage of medical professionals in rural Mexico.

He has railed against the U.S. sanctions on Cuba, calling them “depraved” and a key reason that Cubans are migrating. He said that the people of Cuba deserve a “dignity award” for resisting U.S. interference for over 60 years and that the entire country should be declared a World Heritage site.

Mexico hosted dialogues between the Venezuelan government and that country's opposition and resisted U.S. pres-

sure to recognize opposition leader Juan Guaidó as “interim president.”

AMLO's hemispheric supporters also appreciate his recurring call for the Spanish king and the Catholic Church to apologize for the conquest of Latin America.

But AMLO's position as a regional leader was really boosted by his refusal to attend President Biden's June 2022 Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles because of the exclusion of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. This had a snowball effect, prompting other heads of state to skip the gathering and turning Biden's summit into a flop.

The Summit of the Americas is closely associated with the OAS, another institution AMLO has criticized, especially for its role in the Bolivian coup. AMLO has called for replacing the OAS with a truly autonomous body—“a lackey to no one.” That substitute would be the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

CELAC has only existed for 10 years and, unlike the OAS, it includes Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua but not the United States and Canada. Its goal is to stimulate Latin American/Caribbean independence, integration, and autonomy. Mexico's 2021 hosting of a CELAC Summit attended by almost all the leaders of the region gave the body a huge boost.

AMLO and some other Latin American leaders have taken this concept of Latin American integration a step further, calling for a sort of European Union with a single currency and the right to cross borders. It harkens back to the dream of Simón Bolívar to create a unified Latin America.

When it comes to relations with the United States, AMLO walks a fine line between railing against U.S. policy toward Latin America and maintaining a positive relationship—even under Donald Trump. Mexico has no alternative, AMLO believes, because it shares a 2,000-mile border and there are, by Mexico's government's calculations, some 40 million Mexicans living in the United States. Even more than that, almost 80% of Mexican exports go to the United States.

But AMLO insists that the 200-year U.S. domination of Latin America has

been exhausted and must come to an end.

“We are not a protectorate, a colony, or anyone's backyard,” he declared in a groundbreaking July 2021 speech. “We say ‘adios’ to the impositions, interference, sanctions, exclusion, and blockades.” Instead, he called for a relationship based on nonintervention, self-determination, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

These ideas resonate across Latin America, especially with the new left tide sweeping the continent—the elec-

AMLO insists that the 200-year U.S. domination of Latin America has been exhausted and must come to an end.

tion of President Gustavo Petro in Colombia being the latest and most spectacular, given the country's close alliance with the United States. If Lula wins in Brazil in the upcoming elections, the continent will be ripe for a new regional architecture and setting its own terms for its relations with the United States. The continent will also be grasping for new models of development that don't rely on extractivism and corporate profits but improving the quality of life and the environment. Millions across the hemisphere will look to their new leaders, as well as AMLO and CELAC, to help navigate that process.

Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Global Exchange and CODEPINK: Women for Peace, is the author of the 2018 book, Inside Iran: The Real History and Politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Her previous books include Kingdom of the Unjust: Behind the U.S.-Saudi Connection, Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control, Don't Be Afraid Gringo: A Honduran Woman Speaks from the Heart, and (with Jodie Evans) Stop the Next War Now (Inner Ocean Action Guide).

Can a Deeply Unequal Nation Totally Reverse Course?

Colombia's New president has just placed a bet on greater equality. His nation's rich can't see him collecting.

By Sam Pizzigati

The alarm bells are—sort of—ringing, Bloomberg reports, in Colombia's most “fashionable neighborhoods of Bogotá and Medellín.”

Colombia's newly elected progressive president has just proposed a wealth tax, on his first day in office no less. In Latin America, the world's most unequal region, an egalitarian move like that would normally have a nation's most privileged enraged and frothing. And some of that frothing certainly is showing up since Gustavo Petro, Colombia's first left president, proposed his new levy on grand fortunes. A top exec with Colombia's largest financial conglomerate now even says he sees “a significant risk” the nation's stock market “will practically disappear” under Petro's reign.

But Colombia's rich are, by and large, showing little of such hysterics. Simply put, Colombia's wealthiest just don't feel their new president can deliver any real squeeze on their considerable net worths. Petro's “lack of a congressional majority” and Colombia's powerful constitutional court and central bank, as the *Financial Times* has comfortingly informed global investors, will most likely “temper any radical impulses” on the new administration's part.

The new Petro administration, meanwhile, has ample cause for radicalism. In 2019, the last full pre-pandemic year, no major market-based economy in the world had a higher level of income inequality than Colombia. And Colombia's inequality has remained remarkably entrenched for generations, mainly because the rich in Colombia have been able to transfer a greater share of their riches to their offspring than the rich of any other nation. One result: Colombia's top 1% hold an astounding 81% of their society's private land, well above the 52% Latin American regional average.

Colombia's tax system does next to nothing to dent this deeply pronounced inequality. Taxes in Colombia, a 2021 World Bank study points out, “do reduce inequality but by very little: 0.5 of one percentage point.”

Colombia's severe and sustained inequality has nurtured generations of do-nothing—for average people—government. Colombia spends 30% less on social benefits than the Latin American and Caribbean average. Colombian cash-transfer programs and subsidies for gas, water, and electricity, the World Bank



Gustavo Petro and his VP Francia Márquez

adds, also “suffer from large leakages to high-income households.”

In the face of an inequality this deep-seated, Gustavo Petro noted in his first global media interview after Colombia's June presidential election, the time has come to “make reforms, not to leave things as they are.” And those reforms, Petro believes, must come quickly. On paper, his presidential term runs four years. In reality, he feels, he has just one to make a difference.

“Reforms are either made the first year,” Petro explains, “or they are not made at all.”

What can Petro reform in his first year? He's taking a particular aim at Colombia's tax system. Taxes currently, Petro explains, can claim to be progressive “up to the upper middle class” since the upper-middle class pays more in taxes

pay an annual 1% annual tax on all personal asset value over \$1.1 million, with that value based on present-day market rates. Asset value between about \$600,000 and \$1.1 million would face a 0.5% tax.

Petro's wealth tax, as proposed, would fall on only the wealthiest 0.02% of Colombia's population. A somewhat wider swathe of Colombia's most affluent would find themselves with significantly higher tax bills if Petro's proposed tax increases on dividend income work their way into law. Petro also has a new windfall tax in the offing for oil and mining corporations.

The passing of any of these proposals would rate as historic. In Colombia, as Bogotá think-tank economist María Fernanda Valdés observes, “We have never had a reform that was focused on making the people who have the most pay.”

Petro's proposals now have the atten-

tion of the U.S. business press, and ominous-sounding headlines have begun to appear. “Taxes to Soar 200% for Rich Colombians in Bill Inspired by Thomas Piketty,” a Bloomberg report week announced in August, throwing in a reference to the French economist who has become the world's foremost proponent of taxing grand private fortunes.

Petro's tax package would indeed up the taxes Colombia's richest annually pay by that 200%—triple their tax bill, in effect. But that 200% increase says more about how little Colombia's rich now pay in taxes than the radicalism of what Petro is proposing.

By mid-20th-century U.S. standards, the tax reforms Petro is proposing remain decidedly modest. No deep pocket in Colombia will pay over 39% of any dollar in income under the Petro proposals. In the United States, the tax rate on income over \$200,000—the equivalent of about \$3.4 million today—hit 94% in 1944, and the nation's top tax rate would keep hovering around 90% over the next two decades.

Those mid-century U.S. top marginal tax rates, note economists Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, served “to constrain the immoderate, and especially unmerited, accumulation of riches.” In the decades right after World War II, they add, the United States “came as close as any democratic country” ever has “to imposing a legal maximum income.” The nation's pretax income inequality “shrank dramatically.”

And postwar Japan, where U.S. occupiers put in place an 85% top tax rate, saw a similar story. Between 1950 and 1982, Saez and Zucman detail, “Japan grew at one of the fastest rates ever recorded,” in “one of the most striking economic success stories of all time.”

In the United States, the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan ended the era of high tax rates on high incomes. America's richest, even before taking loopholes into account, today pay taxes at well below half the top rate in effect throughout the 1950s. Colombia's current low tax rates on high incomes essentially mirror the low top tax rates on high incomes in the United States.

Gustavo Petro and his average-income Colombian supporters have now taken an important first step toward undoing Ronald Reagan's hemispheric legacy. Their struggle ahead will be difficult and draining. Wish them luck.

Colombia's inequality has remained entrenched for generations, mainly because the rich have been able to transfer a greater share of their riches to their offspring than the rich of any other nation.

than the middle class and the middle more than the working class.

“But above the upper-middle class lies injustice,” says Petro. “A banker pays proportionally fewer taxes than the secretary in his office. And that cannot be.”

The wealth tax that Petro formally proposed on his first August day in office bears no resemblance to the “wealth tax” that's been sitting in Colombia's tax code for over a century. This aged levy applies only to the original purchase price of assets like stocks, bonds, and real estate and doesn't take the current value into account. For Colombia's richest, the tax amounts to a minor irritant at worst.

Petro's proposed wealth tax would, by contrast, force Colombia's wealthiest to

Originally published by *Counterpunch*.
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Tell Biden: It's been long enough!

Remove Cuba from the Infamous State Sponsors of Terrorism List

By Medea Benjamin and
Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan

As Cubans celebrated the July 26 Day of the National Rebellion—a public holiday commemorating the 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks that is considered the precursor to the 1959 revolution—U.S. groups were calling on the Biden administration to stop its cruel sanctions that are creating such hardship for the Cuban people. In particular, they are pushing President Biden to take Cuba off the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

Being on this list subjects Cuba to a series of devastating international financial restrictions. It is illegal for U.S. banks to process transactions to Cuba, but U.S. sanctions also have an unlawful extra-territorial reach. Fearful of getting in the crosshairs of U.S. regulations, most Western banks have also stopped processing



Assata Shakur

During the Obama Administration, when there was a warming of bilateral relations with Cuba, the Obama-Biden White House undertook its own review and certified that the government of Cuba was not supporting terrorism and had

When Donald Trump became president, he not only imposed over 200 new, harsh sanctions on the island, but in the last days of his administration, in a final move to curry favor with anti-normalization Cuban-Americans, he added Cuba back onto this list. The only other countries with this designation are Syria, Iran, and North Korea.

The addition of Cuba to the list by then Secretary of State Mike Pompeo curtailed a process of congressional consultation and avoided conducting any actual formal review of Cuba's supposed actions to justify its addition to the list again.

The nonsensical rationale by Pompeo to add Cuba back to the list was that Cuba was granting safe harbor to Colombian terrorists. But these Colombian groups were in Cuba as part of an internationally recognized process of peace negotiations that the United States, Norway, Colombia and even Pope Francis supported.

Trump specifically cited Cuba's re-

fusal to extradite ten members of the ELN (National Liberation Army), as requested during Colombia's Ivan Duque administration. However, Cuba was under no obligation to extradite anyone as they have no extradition treaty with the United States, nor is the failure to extradite someone based solely on U.S. desires an act of "terrorism." In addition, Colombia's constitution states that "extradition shall not be granted for a political crime." Moreover, Gustavo Petro, a former member of another rebel group called M-19, has been inaugurated as president of Colombia. He has said to the ELN and all existing armed groups that "the time for peace has come"—a message the Biden administration should embrace.

The other reason stated by the Trump administration for adding Cuba to the list is that Cuba harbors U.S. fugitives from justice. The 2020 State Department report cited three cases, all involving incidents that occurred in the early 1970s. The most famous is the case of Assata Shakur (born Joanne Chesimard), who has become an icon of the Black Lives Matter movement. Shakur, now 75 years old, was a member of the Black Liberation Army. In a trial that many deemed unfair, she was convicted of killing a state trooper when, in 1973, the car she was traveling in was stopped on the New Jersey Turnpike for a broken tail light. Shakur escaped from prison and was granted political asylum in Cuba. Fidel Castro called her a victim of "the fierce repression against the Black movement in the United States" and "a true political prisoner."

Her co-defendant Sundiata Acoli, now in his mid-80s, was granted parole this year. Given how old the claims are and that these considerations were already previously reviewed by the Obama-Biden administration and not found to be sufficient to justify designation as a state sponsor of terrorism, it's certainly time for the Biden administration to remember that and bury the hatchet.

In any case, U.S. attorney Robert Muse
continued on page 10 ...

[Pompeo's rationale for adding] Cuba to the list was that Cuba was granting safe harbor to Colombian terrorists. But these Colombian groups were ... part of an internationally recognized process of peace negotiations that the United States, Norway, Colombia and even Pope Francis supported.

transactions involving Cuba or have implemented new layers of compliance. This has hampered everything from imports to humanitarian aid to development assistance, and has sparked a new European campaign to challenge their banks' compliance with U.S. sanctions.

These banking restrictions and Trump-era sanctions, together with the economic fallout from COVID-19, have led to a severe humanitarian and economic crisis for the very Cuban people the administration claims to support. They are also a major cause of the recent increase in migration of Cubans that has become a major political liability for the Biden administration.

If anything, it is Cuba that has been the victim of international terrorism emanating mainly from the United States.

At the beginning of Biden's presidency, he stated that Cuba's designation on this list was under review. Eighteen months later, with the administration obviously more concerned about Florida politics than the welfare of the Cuban people, the results of this review have still not been revealed. Cuba remains on the list, with no justification and despite Biden hailing diplomacy—not escalation of tension and conflict—as his administration's preferred path.

provided the United States with assurances that it would not do so in the future. As a result, Cuba was taken off the infamous list.



Photo: Medea Benjamin

The Long U.S. History of Military Meddling

The U.S. has launched 251 armed interventions since 1991, and 469 since 1798

By Benjamin Norton

The United States launched at least 251 military interventions between 1991 and 2022 according to a report by the Congressional Research Service, a U.S. government institution that compiles information on behalf of Congress.

The report documented another 218 U.S. military interventions between 1798 and 1990.

This data was published on March 8, 2022, by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), in a document titled “Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798–2022.”

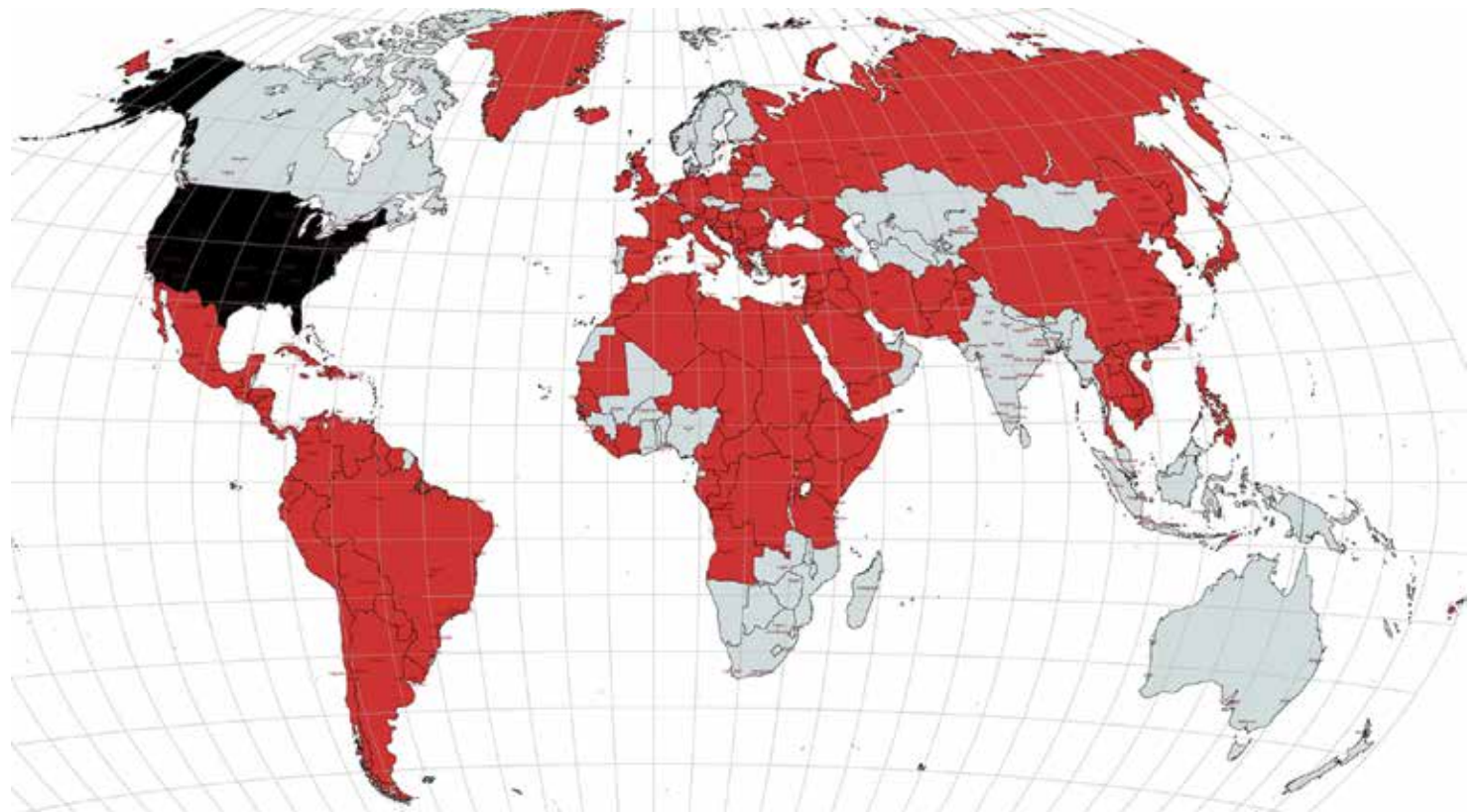
The list of countries targeted by the U.S. military includes the vast majority of the nations on Earth, including almost every single county in Latin America and the Caribbean and most of the African continent.

From the beginning of 1991 to the beginning of 2004, the U.S. military launched 100 interventions, according to CRS. That number grew to 200 military interventions between 1991 and 2018.

The report shows that, since the end of the first cold war in 1991, at the moment of U.S. unipolar hegemony, the number of Washington’s military interventions abroad substantially increased.

The list of countries targeted by the U.S. military includes the vast majority of the nations on Earth, including almost every single county in Latin America and the Caribbean and most of the African continent.

Of the total 469 documented foreign military interventions, the Congressional Research Service noted that the U.S. government only formally declared war 11



A map of countries where the United States has militarily intervened (Source: Congressional Research Service)

times, in just five separate wars.

The data exclude the independence war between U.S. settlers and the British empire, any military deployments between 1776 and 1798, and the U.S. Civil War.

It is important to stress that these conservative estimates, because they do not include U.S. special operations, covert actions, or domestic deployments.

The CRS report clarified: “The list does not include covert actions or numerous occurrences in which U.S. forces have been stationed abroad since World War II in occupation forces or for participation in mutual security organizations, base agreements, or routine military assistance or training operations.”

The report likewise excludes the deployment of U.S. military forces against Indigenous peoples, when they were systematically ethnically cleansed in the violent process of westward settler-colonial expansion.

CRS acknowledged that it left out the “continual use of U.S. military units in the exploration, settlement, and pacification of the western part of the United States.”

The Military Intervention Project at Tufts University’s Center for Strategic

Studies has documented even more foreign meddling.

“The U.S. has undertaken over 500 international military interventions since 1776, with nearly 60% undertaken between 1950 and 2017,” the project wrote. “What’s more, over one-third of these missions occurred after 1999.”

The Military Intervention Project added: “With the end of the Cold War era,

we would expect the U.S. to decrease its military interventions abroad, assuming lower threats and interests at stake. But these patterns reveal the opposite—the U.S. has increased its military involvements abroad.”

Benjamin Norton is a Latin America-based journalist, writer, and filmmaker, focusing primarily on U.S. foreign policy and geopolitics.

Cuba

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insists that providing asylum to U.S. citizens does not justify putting Cuba on a terrorist list. U.S. law defines international terrorism as “acts involving the citizens or the territory of more than one country.” None of the U.S. citizens residing in Cuba committed a terrorist act that was international in nature.

Using this terrorist list for purely political reasons undermines the legitimacy of the terrorism designation itself. As Sen. Patrick Leahy said, “This blatantly politicized designation makes a mockery of what had been a credible, objective measure of a foreign government’s active support for terrorism. Nothing remotely like that exists [in Cuba].” On the contrary, Cuba has often been praised for its international cooperation and solidarity, especially in providing free or low-cost healthcare and medical support to poor countries worldwide, including throughout the global pandemic.

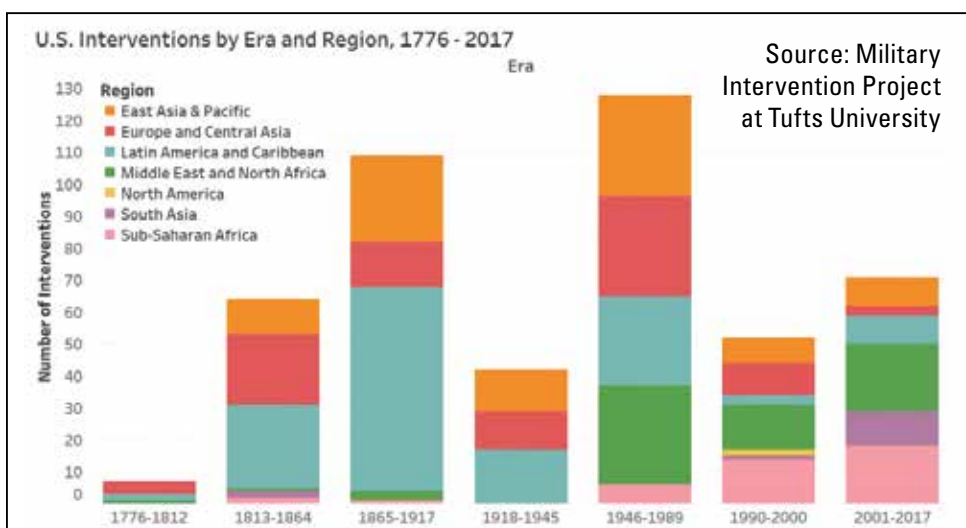
If anything, it is Cuba that has been the victim of international terrorism emanating mainly from the United States. This ranges from the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion and hundreds of assassination attempts against Fidel Castro to the downing of a Cuban civilian airplane (while the United States provided actual cover to the

terrorist, who lived out his life peacefully in Miami) and the bombing of Cuban hotels. Just last April, the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C., came under an armed attack by a U.S. citizen. The United States continues to provide millions of dollars in taxpayer funding every year to organizations engaged in defamation and smear campaigns, and to directly undermine the sovereignty of another government with little to no oversight.

Removing Cuba from the terrorist list would facilitate the island’s ability to receive loans, access critical foreign assistance and benefit from humanitarian aid. You can join the campaign to tell Biden to reverse the outrageous Trump-era designation that is unjust, harmful to the Cuban people, and damaging to U.S.-Cuban relations at codepink.org/cuba-no-terror.

Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Global Exchange and CODEPINK: Women for Peace, is the author of the 2018 book, Inside Iran: The Real History and Politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Her previous books include Kingdom of the Unjust: Behind the U.S.-Saudi Connection, Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control, Don’t Be Afraid Gringo: A Honduran Woman Speaks from the Heart, and (with Jodie Evans) Stop the Next War Now (Inner Ocean Action Guide).

Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan is a prominent human rights lawyer and former president of the National Lawyers Guild.



Murder on Embassy

Row 46 Years On

Remembering the assassination of Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt

By Jeremy Kuzmarov

On the morning of Sept. 21, 1976, a car bomb took the lives of Orlando Letelier, minister of Foreign Relations and ambassador to the United States under Chile's socialist President Salvador Allende (1970–1973), and Ronni Karpen Moffitt, a 25-year-old fundraiser for the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), a left-wing think-tank in Washington, D.C.

The Chevrolet Malibu in which they were traveling exploded near Sheridan Circle in Washington, D.C., on Embassy Row. Ronni's husband Michael survived the bombing with minor wounds, cursing the “fascists” who had killed Letelier and his young wife.

Two years after the bombing, the U.S. Justice Department prosecuted nine co-conspirators, including five Cuban-Americans associated with the right-wing anti-Castro movement, along with an American expatriate living in Chile, Michael Vernon Townley, an explosives expert and right-wing terrorist born in 1942 in Waterloo, Iowa, who worked for the Chilean security services (DINA) and CIA.



Ronni Karpen Moffitt.

Townley wound up accepting a plea bargain that limited his sentence to 10 years (he only served five before being freed in the Witness Protection program).

Townley claimed that DINA director Manuel Contreras, a CIA asset from 1974 to 1977, had ordered Letelier's assassination through his chief of operations, Pedro Espinoza, and that a DINA operative named Armando Fernández had helped him surveil Letelier.

According to historian Alan McPherson, Contreras—who in 1995 was sentenced to seven years in prison for his role in the Letelier and Moffitt murders—was “an archetypal Cold War psychopath.” He harbored “a murderous paranoia about ‘subversives’” and was “responsible for the murder or ‘disappearance’ of about a

third of the roughly 3,000 people killed by [Augusto] Pinochet's [fascist] regime.”

An admirer of Spanish fascist Francisco Franco, Pinochet came to power in a CIA-backed coup in 1973 that ousted Salvador Allende.

Allende was a medical doctor who had helped found Chile's Socialist Party in 1933. He had become the Nixon Administration's public enemy number one because of what Noam Chomsky once termed the “threat of a good example”—namely the institution of socialist policies that would inspire other nations to develop their economies independently from Washington.

After his election as president, Allende emphasized that Chile was “not Cuba in 1959,” in that “the right has not been crushed here by popular uprising. It has only narrowly been beaten in elections. Its power remains intact. It still has its industries, banks, land, and its allies in the army.”

Allende as such outlined a six-year program of gradual social and economic change to lay the foundations for a legal revolution from capitalism to socialism. Its aim was to establish public ownership over the country's mines and factories, whose profits would find their way into public investment and social services rather than into the pockets of the wealthy.

On Dec. 21, 1970, a month and a half after his inauguration, President Allende proposed a constitutional amendment to nationalize Chilean copper because, as he explained, “the total value of all the capital accumulated in Chile over the last 400 years has left its frontiers.”

At the time, two major U.S. copper corporations, Anaconda and Kennecott, controlled 80% of the Chilean copper industry, which accounted for about four-fifths of Chile's export earnings. Allende was willing to pay compensation, though Anaconda and Kennecott wanted millions more than what the Chilean government felt was just.

Even before Allende's inauguration, U.S. President Richard M. Nixon ordered a massive covert intervention in Chile code-named FUBELT, whose end goal was regime change.

In collaboration with Chile's upper-middle and upper classes, the CIA was committed to sabotaging Chile's economy by fomenting strikes and “creating a coup climate by propaganda, disinformation and terrorist activities to provide a stimulus and pretext for the military to move.”

When the coup was carried out on Sept. 11, 1973, Allende was murdered. The Chilean military subsequently carried out hundreds of executions by firing squad and mass arrests.



Chile's ruler Augusto Pinochet with U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in Santiago, June 8, 1976—a mere three months before Letelier's murder. Photo: kyleorton.co.uk

The Swedish Ambassador to Chile at the time, Harald Edelstam, who helped hundreds escape persecution, estimated that 10,000–15,000 people were killed in the first three months after the coup as the Chilean military had orders to kill anyone who resisted.

Among those who were detained and narrowly escaped death at Dawson Island concentration camp was Letelier, a lawyer and economist who had started his career working in Chile's Department of Copper when he developed his support for Allende's nationalization policy.

Victims of Operation Condor

According to Letelier, the day after the coup, he was taken out of his jail cell blindfolded before a firing squad, though one of the sergeants yelled “Halt!” and his life was spared—temporarily.

After his release to Venezuela, Letelier moved to Washington, D.C., to work

for IPS, where he developed a study of U.S.-Chilean relations during the Allende years and began to plan for a resistance movement to General Pinochet with other exiled Chilean Socialist Party leaders.

DINA's assassination campaign was part of Operation Condor—a CIA-driven effort modeled after the Phoenix Program in Vietnam in which Southern Cone intelligence services coordinated their efforts to hunt down leftwing dissidents, including civilian politicians.

The U.S. government provided crucial support for Operation Condor through police training programs and the establishment of blacklists and a communications infrastructure based in the Panama Canal Zone, as well as the political backing of U.S. officials, chief among them former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

In September 1974, in a prelude to the assassination of Letelier, Michael Townley built a car bomb to assassinate General

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The Colonel

By Carolyn Forché - 1950

WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD is true. I was in his house. His wife carried a tray of coffee and sugar. His daughter filed her nails, his son went out for the night. There were daily papers, pet dogs, a pistol on the cushion beside him. The moon swung bare on its black cord over the house. On the television was a cop show. It was in English. Broken bottles were embedded in the walls around the house to scoop the kneecaps from a man's legs or cut his hands to lace. On the windows there were gratings like those in liquor stores. We had dinner, rack of lamb, good wine, a gold bell was on the table for calling the maid. The maid brought green mangoes, salt, a type of bread. I was asked how I enjoyed the country. There was a brief commercial in Spanish. His wife took everything away. There was some talk then of how difficult it had become to govern. The parrot said hello on the terrace. The colonel told it to shut up, and pushed himself from the table. My friend said to me with his eyes: say nothing. The colonel returned with a sack used to bring groceries home. He spilled many human ears on the table. They were like dried peach halves. There is no other way to say this. He took one of them in his hands, shook it in our faces, dropped it into a water glass. It came alive there. I am tired of fooling around he said. As for the rights of anyone, tell your people they can go fuck themselves. He swept the ears to the floor with his arm and held the last of his wine in the air. Something for your poetry, no? he said. Some of the ears on the floor caught this scrap of his voice. Some of the ears on the floor were pressed to the ground.

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'The Colonel' was written while in El Salvador in 1978, while the country was in the middle of a civil war between the U.S.-backed military and government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front.

Roger Waters

... continued from page 1

wreath to honor him, and all the other fallen. Losing my father before I ever knew him and being brought up by a single, working mother who fought tirelessly for equality and justice colored my life in far-reaching ways and has driven all my work. And, at this point in my journey, I like to think that I pay tribute to both my parents each time I speak out in support of any beleaguered people denied the freedom and justice that I believe all of us deserve.

After visiting Israel in 2005 and the West Bank the following year, I was deeply moved and concerned by what I saw, and determined to add my voice to those searching for an equitable and lawful solution to the problem—for both Palestinians and Jews.

Given my upbringing, I really had no choice.

In 2005, Palestinian civil society appealed to people of conscience all over the world to act where governments had failed. They asked us to join their nonviolent movement—for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS)—which aims to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, to secure equal rights for Palestinian citizens of Israel, and to uphold the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the cities and villages they were violently forced out of in 1948 and 1967.

After more than two decades of negotiations, the vulnerable Palestinian population still lives under occupation, while more land is taken, more illegal settlements built, and more Palestinians are imprisoned, injured or killed struggling for the right to live in dignity and peace, to raise their families, to till their land, to aspire to each and every human goal, just like the rest of us. The Palestinians' prolonged statelessness has made them among the most vulnerable of all peoples, particularly in their diaspora where, as now in Syria, they are subject, as stateless, powerless refugees, to targeted violence, from all sides in that bloody conflict, subject to unimaginable hardship and deprivation and, in many cases, particularly for the vulnerable young, to starvation.

What can we all do to advance the rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories, Israel and the diaspora? Well, BDS is a nonviolent, citizen-led movement that is grounded in universal principles of human rights for all people. All people! In consequence, I have determined that the BDS approach is one I can fully support.

I feel honored to stand in solidarity alongside my father and my mother, and alongside my Palestinian brothers and sisters, and so many others of all colors, faiths and circumstances from all over the world—including an ever-increasing number of courageous Jewish Americans and Israelis—who have also answered the call.

In the furor that exists in the U.S. today about BDS and the right and wrong of a cultural boycott of Israel, a



Veterans For Peace at a demonstration in Bil'in, Palestine. Photo: Ellen Davidson

quote from one of my heroes, Mahatma Gandhi, has been on my mind. He prophetically said, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." The BDS movement is fulfilling its promise and fits Gandhi's description. Once dismissed by many as a futile strategy that would "never work," BDS has gained much ground, bringing with it the expected backlash.

Divestment votes at major U.S. universities, European pension funds divesting from Israeli banks that do business with illegal Israeli settlements, and the high-profile parting of the ways between actor Scarlett Johansson and the global anti-poverty group Oxfam are symptoms of a growing resistance to the Israeli subjugation of the indigenous people of Palestine, and also, to the decades of occupation of land designated by the U.N. as a future state for the Palestinian people.

And with each new BDS headline, the ferocious reaction from the movement's critics, with Netanyahu and his AIPAC fulminations in the vanguard, has risen exponentially. I think it's safe to say BDS is in the "then they fight you" stage.

Some wrongly portray the boycott movement, which is modeled on the boycotts employed against Apartheid South Africa and used in the U.S. civil rights movement, to be an attack on the Israeli people or even on the Jewish people, as a whole. Nothing could be further from the truth. The movement recognizes universal human rights under the law for all people, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or color.

I do not claim to speak on behalf of the BDS movement, yet, as a vocal supporter, and because of my vis-

ibility in the music industry, I have become a natural target for those who wish to attack BDS, not by addressing the merits of its claims but, instead, by assigning hateful and racist motivations to BDS supporters like me. It has even been said, cruelly and wrongly, that I am a Nazi and an anti-Semite.

I believe that the root of all injustice and oppression has always been the same—the dehumanization of the other. It is the obsession with Us and Them that can lead us, regardless of racial or religious identity, into the abyss.

When I remarked in a recent interview on historical parallels, stating that I would not have played Vichy France or Berlin in World War II, it was not my intention to compare the Israelis to Nazis or the Holocaust to the decades-long oppression of the Palestinians. There is no comparison to the Holocaust. Nor did I intend or ever wish to compare the suffering of Jews then with the suffering of Palestinians now. Comparing suffering is a painful, grotesque and diminishing exercise that dishonors the specific memory of all our fallen loved ones.

I believe that the root of all injustice and oppression has always been the same—the dehumanization of the other. It is the obsession with Us and Them that can lead us, regardless of racial or religious identity, into the abyss.

Let us never forget that oppression begets more oppression, and the tree of fear and bigotry bears only bitter fruit. The end of the occupation of Palestine, should we all manage to secure it, will mean freedom for the occupied and the occupiers and freedom from the bitter taste of all those wasted years and lives. And that will be a great gift to the world.

"Ashes and diamonds
Foe and friend
We were all equal
In the end."

Roger Waters is an internationally recognized and respected musician and social justice activist. He is embarking on a North American concert tour called *This Is Not a Drill*. More information at rogerwaters.com.

The Gunners Dream

By Roger Waters

Floating down, through the clouds
Memories come rushing up to meet me now
But in the space between the heavens
And the corner of some foreign field
I had a dream
I had a dream
Goodbye Max, goodbye Ma
After the service, when you're walking slowly to
the car
And the silver in her hair shines in the cold
November air
You hear the tolling bell and touch the silk in your lapel
And as the teardrops rise to meet the comfort of
the band
You take her frail hand
And hold on to the dream
A place to stay, enough to eat

Somewhere, old heroes shuffle safely down the street
Where you can speak out loud about your doubts
and fears
And what's more, no one ever disappears
You never hear their standard issue kicking in
your door
You can relax on both sides of the tracks
And maniacs don't blow holes in bandmen by
remote control
And everyone has recourse to the law
And no one kills the children anymore
No one kills the children anymore
Night after night, going 'round and 'round my brain
His dream is driving me insane
In the corner of some foreign field
The gunner sleeps tonight
What's done is done
We cannot just write off his final scene
Take heed of the dream
Take heed

War on Women

... continued from page 8

for open discussion about the differences. Comandanta Amada ended with an admonishment that must be taken to heart: “If we don’t let geographies divide us, then let’s not let calendars divide us either.”

During the discussions and in the speeches almost nobody talked about the government’s role in ending violence against women, except to say that it has failed. This is interesting, considering that women’s movements have invested a great deal of time, effort and resources into drafting and passing legislation, improving justice systems, putting abusers behind bars and creating governmental protection mechanisms and programs. The results have been alarmingly bad.

Even programs that seem to have worked prove to be vulnerable and too often ephemeral. Take the 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in the United States. The act has been credited with reducing domestic violence by 60% and yet the Republican Senate refused to renew it because the House passed a strengthened version that broadened a prohibition on the sale of firearms to those convicted of domestic violence. U.S. studies show women are five times more likely to be murdered by men if there is a gun in the house. Similar studies in Mexico and Central American countries where the United States exports massive amounts of firearms also show the lethal link between guns and femicide. But apparently, the political clout of the National Rifle Association trumps women’s lives.

Where rightwing governments come to power—Trump in the United States and Bolsonaro in Brazil come to mind—hard-won protections for women are rolled back at mind-boggling speed. Even progressive governments—like Mexico’s under President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who has declared “the end of neoliberalism”—end up putting women’s rights and safety on the historical back burner.

So it’s no wonder that proposals from the gathering focused on women’s grassroots organizing and collective self-protection. While groups of women practiced self-defense training in the community soccer field, others discussed their work in accompanying women who

have to take routes known to be dangerous, creating “safe spaces,” publicly denouncing abusers where impunity reigns, forming brigades to search for women who have been forcibly disappeared, adopting security protocols in their organizations, creating victims’ support groups and popular education groups, providing translators for indigenous women, defending migrant women en route, setting up counseling services and all kinds of creative therapies, visiting women in prison and providing re-entry services, campaigns for women tourists to prevent abuse and assault in resort areas, performances and street art to raise consciousness, networks of women human rights defenders, fighting for access to land for economic security for rural women, building shelters, sharing basic necessities and creating an infinitely wide range of ground-up initiatives.

In general, the idea is to build feminist caring com-

munities that don’t necessarily give up on law enforcement, but take matters into their own hands. For many, the state has lost all credibility as a guarantor of basic safety for women. Many groups continue to document and denounce abuses, while at the same time protecting and providing among themselves.

Today’s movement aims not only to “take back the streets,” but to take back every nook and cranny where women live their lives. To spend three days in an encampment of thousands of women committed to ending violence—without men, without fear—provided an exhilarating glimpse of the freedom we want.

Because, as feminists, we know that those battles for nooks and crannies are precisely where real transformation is born.

Laura Carlsen is the director of the Americas Program in Mexico City and advisor to Just Associates (JASS).



Milicianas Zapatistas give a military performance at the Encuentro. Photo: Aisling Walsh/Women Under Siege

Ronni Moffit

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Carlos Prats, Pinochet’s predecessor as chief of the Chilean Armed Forces and an Allende loyalist who had the potential to lead a progressive-military coalition to overthrow Pinochet.

Letelier was the next target because he had been a) effective in cultivating alliances with Democratic Party senators and in lobbying for the cut-off of U.S. military aid to Chile; b) had helped initiate a Dutch embargo of Chilean products; c) had denounced Pinochet’s atrocities at a large rally in Madison Square Garden; and d) was working to develop plans for a new world economy that would undercut the power of large corporations.

The U.S. government was complicit in Letelier’s murder because of the Nixon and Ford Administrations’ strong support for General Pinochet’s regime and covert support for the deadly Operation Condor, of which Letelier’s murder was a part.

The same year that Letelier was assassinated, Pinochet had personally complained to then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger about Letelier’s activities, in a conversation in which Kissinger assured the dictator that “we are sympathetic with what you are trying to do.”

Michael Townley had learned explosives skills from Frank Sturgis and CIA experts in Miami, and worked in Chile under David Atlee Phillips in an effort to block Allende’s election in 1970.

The CIA not only trained the main culprits, but also

aided in the cover-up.

After the killing, the CIA promoted disinformation that DINA was innocent and that Letelier and Moffitt had been killed by a leftist so Letelier could be transformed into a martyr.

Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt’s assassination at the hands of CIA-trained forces provides a chilling reminder of the blowback associated with U.S. foreign policies during the Cold War.

U.S. support for fascist regimes abroad in that period resulted in a huge spike in international terrorism that extended to the United States itself.

Condor-type operations could easily re-emerge today with the advent of a new Cold War, and as part of a backlash against the ascendancy of the political left in South America.

Washington’s influence, however, and appeal of fascist

ideas in Latin America are not as strong as they once were.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who is an heir of the Pinochet tradition, is more and more isolated in the

U.S. support for fascist regimes abroad ... resulted in a huge spike in international terrorism that extended to the United States itself.

region, while socialist governments have survived recent CIA-backed coup attempts in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Bolivia.

Chile is currently governed, meanwhile, by a young left-leaning president, Gabriel Boric, who has repudiated not only Pinochet but also the Chicago Boys, saying that, “if Chile was the cradle of neoliberalism, it will also be its grave.”

This would have been music to the ears of Orlando Letelier, whose struggle for a more just economic order may yet be fulfilled.

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Assassinated Chilean President Salvador Allende.

Photo: radicalteatowel.co.uk

Stopping the Guns that Destroy Lives in Mexico

By John Lindsay-Poland

The uncontrolled flow of guns from the United States to Mexico is a root cause of the high levels of murders, extortion, forced migration, and other kinds of violence that assault Mexico and the region. But we can do something to put a halt to this deadly commerce.

The violence has numerous sources: the “war on drugs,” the extortion business, trafficking in people, toxic masculinity, political repression and more, but the thread running through them all is the huge number of U.S.-sourced firearms. The availability of so many weapons complicates Mexico’s path to resolving its most urgent challenges. Easy access to firearms reinforces the power of criminal organizations and of corrupt military and police officers, both dependent on the continuing flow of weapons.

The U.S. gun market is enormous, militarized, and permissive, with thousands

of gun shops in border states such as Texas, Arizona, and California. In Mexico, on the other hand, the legal purchase of guns is very restricted, with a single gun shop operated by the army.

At least 70% of all guns recovered in Mexico and traced come from the United States. The open sale of assault weapons and sniper rifles represents an obvious source of arms for organizations that use violence in Mexico to control and fight over markets for drugs, extortion and fees for the passage of migrants seeking asylum. An estimated 250,000 guns are trafficked illegally over the border from the United States into Mexico each year.

The results are clear: An exponential increase in homicides in Mexico. Gun possession in homes with growing violence and coercion against women. Enormous power of both criminal groups and military agencies that rely on weapons. Displaced communities and migrants seeking refuge, who encounter state agents armed

with U.S. weapons who deport them as well as criminals who rob and even disappear them. Indigenous communities struggling for territorial control. Families and communities destroyed.

Some people believe that if they get their own gun, they can defend themselves against all the violence. But many studies show that a firearm in the home is much, much more likely to be used against someone inside the house than against any attacker. In addition, with people increasingly armed with guns, a kind of arms race is set off that ends up in more violence. The only language for communicating one’s discontent or in conflicts becomes the language of weapons.

The Mexican government’s lawsuit filed last year against 11 U.S. gun companies for negligent practices that promote illegal trafficking of these weapons is an important step. It puts the onus on those who are making profits from the weapons used in so much violence. But it is not enough.

Weapons from the United States and other countries also flow to police and military forces that have committed atrocities, including police in Guerrero state who forcibly disappeared 43 stu-

dents from Ayotzinapa and murdered six more, using assault rifles imported from the United States, Germany, and Italy. State police in the northern state of Tamaulipas have acquired hundreds of rifles imported from the United States via the Mexican army (SEDENA), both before and after massacres committed by those police in 2019 and 2021. Neither the United States nor SEDENA stop deadly weapons from going to such police, nor do they condition weapons transfers on holding accountable police who are implicated in serious crimes.

In Mexico, almost all authority for firearms lives in a single agency: the army. Mexico is the only country in the world where the army is responsible for practically every process related to firearms at the national level, including their production, importation, registration, licenses to carry, sale—to police, individuals and private security companies—and destruction. Soldiers also deploy firearms in operations and recover a large part of crime guns in the country.

SEDENA’s monopoly on firearms in Mexico has serious consequences for civilian control of guns, transparency, and access to information. SEDENA does not limit the sale of weapons to police that evidence shows are corrupt or have committed serious human rights violations, and the number of crime guns recovered by SEDENA has actually fallen in the last 10 years.

The lack of controls on munitions and gun parts is a worldwide problem. Mexico has important reasons to control and reduce this traffic that generates so much violence in the country, among other things. To that end, Mexico should also take action to make transparent the production and export within the country of parts that are essential to fire weapons and destroy lives.

What Can Be Done?

Communities in Mexico and the United States need to raise a united voice against the violence. The future of both countries and our movements for social and environmental justice are inevitably linked.

More than 40 grassroots organizations from across Mexico and the United States are organizing a Peace Summit in February 2023 to strengthen and make visible civil society’s demands, especially those that have been excluded and marginalized—youth, migrants, indigenous communities, and others—on human rights, justice, democracy and peace in the region.

Within Mexico, #PazSinArms is a new coalition of Mexican human rights, feminist, religious and academic groups.

For more information on the Peace Summit, see: peacesummit2023.org. For bilingual information on U.S. guns in Mexico, visit stopusarmstomexico.org

To join #PazSinArmas, please scan the QR code at left.

John Lindsay-Poland coordinates Stop U.S. Arms to Mexico, a project of Global Exchange; you can email him at johnlindsaypoland@gmail.com.

Berta Cáceres’ Murderer Trained by the U.S.

On June 20, 2022, a Honduran court finally presented the written verdict in the case against U.S.-trained former military intelligence officer Roberto David Castillo for the murder of Berta Cáceres, sentencing him to 22 years and 6 months in prison. Laura Zúniga Cáceres, Berta’s youngest daughter explained, “This is an important advance but the masterminds of the crime are still enjoying impunity thanks to their political and economic power. As victims of this crime, we, her family, members of COPINH [Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras], and the Lenca people will continue demanding justice from the Honduran state.”

COPINH published a communique naming members of Honduras’ powerful Atala Zablah family as the intellectual authors of Cáceres’ murder. Castillo was the CEO of hydroelectric corporation DESA, which was attempting to build a hydroelectric project opposed by Berta Cáceres. However, the majority owner of DESA at the time of Cáceres’ murder was a company owned by members of the Atala Zablah family. Three Atala Zablah brothers were DESA board members. The son of one of them, Daniel Atala Midence, was DESA’s Chief Financial Officer. Atala Midence was called to testify as a witness



Berta Cáceres.

in the murder trial by the Cáceres family’s lawyers but avoided testifying after state prosecutors stated he was under investigation for the murder. While he may technically be under investigation, COPINH denounced that state prosecutors “have not made a single real advance identifying the intellectual authors.”

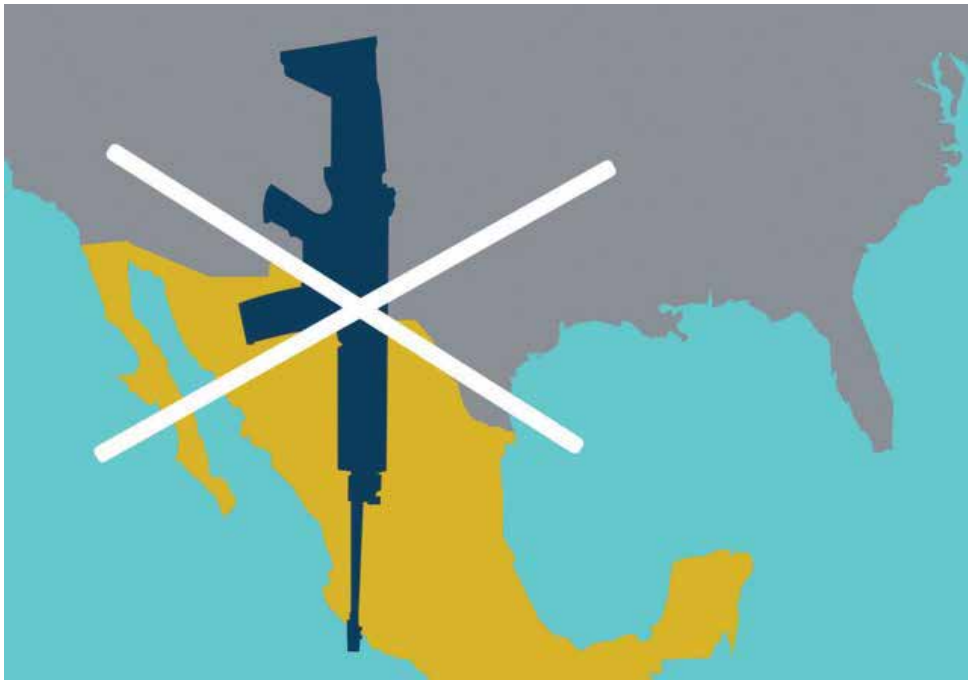
Indeed, it seems the Honduran Public Prosecutor’s Office has attempted to avoid finding intellectual authors responsible for the murder of Berta Cáceres. The Public Prosecutor’s Office has notably failed to present evidence about where the money to pay for Cáceres’ murder came from. They did not even present a proposal to the court to have a financial expert examine the finances of David Castillo and related companies, despite the fact that the first murder trial made it clear there were several corporate entities that paid the salary of one of the men convicted for the murder.

While the Honduran Public Prosecutor’s Office has failed to follow the money, an investigative report released in The Intercept documents how the Dutch Develop-

ment Bank (FMO) repeatedly sent money that was supposed to go to a contractor building the Agua Zarca Project went instead to a company founded by David Castillo, CONCASA. Castillo awarded administrative power of CONCASA to Daniel Atala Midence. The Intercept describes how Atala Midence and Castillo filed requests with FMO for money to pay a construction company but with transfer instructions to CONCASA. FMO sent the money to CONCASA via Deutsche Bank in New York City; both banks processed the transaction despite the huge red flag that the company listed as the payee did not match the company receiving the money.

The article reports that one of these payments, for just over \$1.7 million, was requested by Atala Midence on Feb. 23, 2016, and sent just two days before Cáceres was murdered. Also two days before the murder, Castillo messaged Douglas Bustillo—who coordinated with the hitmen who would murder Berta—about

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Alto a las Armas que Destruyen Vidas en México

Por John Lindsay-Poland

El flujo descontrolado de armas de Estados Unidos a México es una causa raíz de los altísimos niveles de homicidios, extorsiones, la migración forzada y otros tipos de violencia que azotan el país y la región. Sin embargo, hay cosas que podemos hacer para frenar este tráfico mortal.

Las fuentes de violencia son múltiples: la guerra contra las drogas, la industria de la extorsión, la trata de personas, la masculinidad tóxica, la represión política y otras causas más, pero el hilo que cruza todo esto es la gran cantidad de armas de origen estadounidense. La disponibilidad y fácil acceso a tantas armas complica el camino de México para resolver sus desafíos más urgentes y refuerza el poder de las organizaciones criminales y de los funcionarios de seguridad corruptos, ambos dependientes de la continuidad del flujo de estas armas.

El mercado de armas en Estados Unidos es enorme, militarizado y permisivo, con miles de armerías en los estados fronterizos como Texas, Arizona y California. En México, por otra parte, la compra legal de armas de fuego es muy restringida, en una sola tienda operado por el ejército.

Por lo menos setenta por ciento de todas las armas aseguradas en México y trazadas vienen de Estados Unidos. La venta libre de armas de asalto y para francotiradores representa una oferta obvia para organizaciones que utilizan la violencia en México para controlar y disputar mercados de drogas, extorsión y cuotas para el paso de migrantes buscando asilo. Se estima que 250.000 armas de fuego pasan de Estados Unidos ilegalmente por la frontera a México cada año.

Los resultados son evidentes: Crecimiento exponencial de asesinatos en México. Tenencia de armas en hogares donde la violencia y coerción contra mujeres avanza. Poder enorme tanto de organizaciones criminales como de instituciones militares que dependen de las armas. Comunidades desplazadas, migrantes

buscando refugio que enfrentan agentes estatales armados con pistolas de Estados Unidos que los deportan o criminales armados que los extorsionan y hasta los desaparecen. Comunidades indígenas luchando por control territorial. Familias y comunidades destrozadas.

Algunas personas creen que, si compran su propia arma, pueden defenderse contra toda la violencia. Pero sobran estudios que muestran que, con un arma de fuego en el hogar, es mucho, mucho más probable que esa arma se utiliza en contra de alguien dentro de la casa que en contra de un atacante. Además, con cada vez más gente armada, un tipo de carrera armamentista despegue que también resulta en más violencia. El único lenguaje para comunicar en conflictos o del descontento propio llega a ser el del arma.

La demanda judicial del Gobierno de México contra 11 empresas que fabrican armas en Estados Unidos por sus prácticas negligentes que promueven el tráfico ilícito de esas armas es un paso importante. Pone en la mira la responsabilidad de los que lucran de las armas usadas en la violencia y puede tener resultados importantes. Pero no es suficiente.

Las armas de Estados Unidos y otros países también fluyen a policías y militares que han cometido atrocidades, tales como los policías en Guerrero que desaparecieron a los 43 normalistas de Ayotzinapa y asesinaron a seis más, utilizando armas de asalto importadas de Estados Unidos, Alemania e Italia. Policías estatales en Tamaulipas han adquirido, por vía del ejército (SEDENA), cientos de rifles de asalto importados de Estados Unidos, tanto antes como después de masacres cometidas por sus elementos en 2019 y 2021. Ni Estados Unidos ni SEDENA detienen el envío de armas militares a estos policías, tampoco condicionan la transferencia de armas a la justicia y responsabilidad judicial para policías implicados en crímenes serios.

En México, casi toda la autoridad sobre armas se concentra en una sola institución: el ejército (SEDENA). México es el único

país del mundo en el que el Ejército se encarga prácticamente de la totalidad de los procesos relacionados a armas de fuego a nivel federal, incluyendo su producción, importación, registro, portación, comercialización—a policías, particulares y empresas privadas de seguridad—y destrucción. Además, soldados despliegan armas en operativos y aseguran gran porcentaje de las armas ilícitas en el país.

El monopolio de la SEDENA sobre armas en México tiene serias consecuencias sobre el control civil de armas, la transparencia y el acceso a la información. SEDENA no limita las armas que comercializa a policías que han demostrado ser corruptos o cometido graves violaciones y el número de armas ilícitas recuperadas por SEDENA ha bajado en los últimos diez años.

Por otra parte, la industria mexicana exporta municiones y componentes de armas desde México y ha crecido desde el inicio de la pandemia en 2020. Cerca de la frontera con Estados Unidos, hay tres fábricas principales que, según registros aduanales, sirven de maquiladoras para empresas de armas en Estados Unidos: Elamex de Torreón en Coahuila; Kimball Electronics en Reynosa, Tamaulipas; y Mam de la Frontera en Tijuana, Baja California.

Desde estas fábricas se exportaron a Estados Unidos partes de armas con un valor de más de \$51.6 millones de dólares el año pasado, superando el valor de armas, partes y balas exportadas desde Estados Unidos a México en el mismo periodo, que fue de \$35.3 millones de dólares, según registros aduanales. Además, Industrias Tecnos en Cuernavaca cada año exporta cientos de millones de balas a Estados Unidos y a otros países.

La falta de controles de municiones y partes de armas es un problema mundial. México tiene motivos profundos para controlar y reducir ese comercio que, entre otras cosas, produce tanta violencia dentro del país. Para ello, es necesario implementar acciones para transparentar las industrias nacionales de producción y exportación de componentes que son fundamentales para tirar armas de fuego y destruir vidas.

¿Qué podemos hacer?

Las comunidades de México y Estados Unidos debemos alzar una sola voz contra la violencia. El futuro de Estados Unidos y México, así como los movimientos por la justicia social y ambiental de ambos países, están inevitablemente entrelazados.

Más de 40 organizaciones de base en todo México y los Estados Unidos estamos organizando la Cumbre por la Paz en febrero de 2023, para ampliar la voz y visibilizar las demandas de la sociedad civil, especialmente de aquellos y aquellas que actualmente están excluidos y marginados (jóvenes, migrantes, comunidades indígenas y más) en materia de derechos humanos, la justicia, la democracia y la paz en la región.

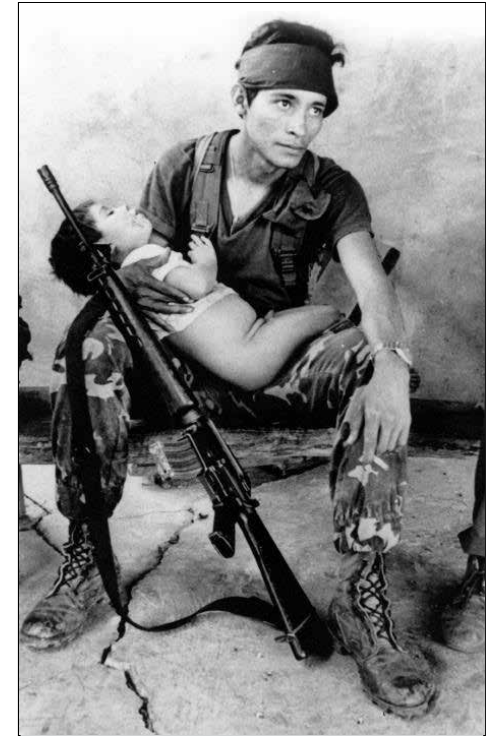
Dentro de México, #PazSinArmas es una nueva red de organizaciones, instituciones y colectivos mexicanos de derechos humanos, feministas, religiosxs, académicxs.

Sobre la Cumbre por la Paz, ver a: peacesummit2023.org/home-es

Para información bilingüe sobre armas de Estados Unidos en México, ver a: stopusarmstomexico.org/español

Para unirte a la red #PazSinArmas use el código QR en la página opuesta.

John Lindsay-Poland coordina el proyecto Alto a las Armas de Estados Unidos en México. Contacto: johnlindsaypoland@gmail.com.



Low Intensity Warfare

(written in the mid-eighties)

By Doug Rawlings

Up here
we're working up
this winter's wood
Down there
below the Rio Grande
below the Durangoes
in the fruit section
of our global IGA
deep in the sweet underbelly
of America
Down there
we're stacking up
bodies

Up here
fall is in the air
the mornings are crisp and clear
the leaves die beautifully
in earth browns
translucent yellows
blood reds
Down there
young peasants
are slipping into puddles
of mangled skin
Down there
Willie Peter*
is hard at work
Down there
the morning air
smells of burning flesh

Up here
business
is as usual

* "Willie Peter" is army slang for white phosphorous

A Strange Convergence



Above: U.S.-Mexico border wall; lower right: Israeli Apartheid Wall

By Eric Maddox

Prior to spending nearly two years on the US-Mexico border, interviewing sex workers in Cd. Juárez, priests and human rights workers in New Mexico and Arizona, and retired law enforcement I spent almost a year in Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem in 2007-08.

At the invitation of a Palestinian friend and resident of the camp I travelled to Palestine to complete graduate research in Conflict Transformation. I arrived with many questions and with a mainstream peacenik perspective. I believed the talking points: “both sides need to soften their approaches,” “violence is never justified,” “we need to create more space for talks,” etc. However, seeing the reality on the ground in the West Bank (and several years later in Gaza as well), I understood what was meant by the Howard Zinn quote, “you can’t be neutral on a moving train.”

The graduate work focused on collecting oral histories from combatants and survivors on both sides of the 1948 war. What shocked me into reality on the way to conduct interviews in the West Bank and Israel proper, was a series of arbitrary checkpoints, dehumanizing cattle gates, heavily

armed occupation soldiers, colonial settlements, armed settlers, Jews-only roads, and a massive 8-meter wall cutting through villages and even families. It became evident that the pretence of endless “talks” was being used as a cover for the colonization and cultural genocide of an indigenous population, and that it was being funded with \$3.8 billion a year of US tax money.

Talking to Israeli civilians in Tel Aviv nightclubs and with Israeli soldiers occupying the streets of Hebron I often found myself having the same conversations. “Be careful of the Arabs, they will attack you when you aren’t looking. Stay with us where you are safe.” When I informed Israelis that I was in fact living in a refugee camp in the West Bank, or that I had been invited for tea up the street in Hebron, I could see the inability to compute that with the dominant narrative the Israeli media, politicians, and school system had fed them. In many ways, Tel Aviv might as well be as far away from Gaza or the West Bank as Los Angeles, given the profound ignorance that its inhabitants had about the lived realities of Palestinians just a few minutes away.

At many points during my time in Palestine I was confronted with the realities of U.S. imperialism, but one day af-

Berta Cáceres

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meeting up the next day to provide him with money.

Prosecution of all the intellectual authors of her assassination is just one way that justice systems around the world are in debt to Berta Cáceres. Any and all financial crimes by those connected to the Agua Zarca Project must also be prosecuted. As Ron Rosenhart Rodriguez, one of COPINH’s lawyers in the Netherlands, told The Intercept, the documents “demonstrate that there are still several lines of financial investigation open for the Honduran, Panamanian, Dutch, and even U.S. authorities to research.”

The day after David Castillo was sentenced for Cáceres’ murder, COPINH protested in front of Honduran Bank BAC Credomatic, where Jacobo Atala Zablah is executive president. Jacobo Atala Zablah was also vice president of the DESA board

of directors and partial owner of DESA through a family investment company. COPINH also protested at the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, another bank that financed the Agua Zarca Hydroelectric Project, and where a board member of DESA, José Eduardo Atala Zablah, was formerly the Honduran director. Finally, Bertha Zúniga, Coordinator of COPINH and daughter of Berta Cáceres, met with Honduran President Xiomara Castro to present proposals to advance justice for Berta Cáceres and the rights of the Lenca people.

While the Honduran Public Prosecutor’s Office may still be unwilling to investigate and prosecute members of Honduras’ economic elite, in the words of Berta Cáceres herself, “they have believed that impunity is eternal but they are wrong. The people know how to do justice.” COPINH has shown time and time again that is true.

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ter making a remark about the obvious monument to injustice that is the Israeli Apartheid Wall, I was asked a very simple question: “Don’t you guys have a wall too, with Mexico?”

Having spent the majority of my life living in California and New Mexico I was immediately struck by my near total ignorance of the parallel reality that had just been pointed out to me, and when I returned to the United States it continued to be a source of shame and curiosity until I managed to win a modest award from the New Mexico State Film Office to complete a project on the U.S.-Mexico Border. Between 2009 and 2011 every free moment was used to travel along the U.S. wall, from Arizona to West Texas.

The Secure Fences Act of 2006, a machination of the G. W. Bush Administration, and the origins of the edifice on the U.S.-Mexico Border, had received votes from then-U.S. Senators Clinton, Obama, and Biden. The wall and its supporting infrastructure were beefed up in urban centers, causing the “funnel effect,” which pushes migrants into the most remote and deadly parts of the desert to make their crossing. The Pima County morgue in Arizona was filled to overflowing with the unidentifiable remains of those who lost their lives looking for a better one.

My inquiry brought me full circle when I stumbled across companies like Elbit Systems, an Israeli company that sells its surveillance technology for use along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Not only was Israel exporting the infrastructure and mechanics of its occupation, it was double-dipping on the U.S. taxpayer; using the military aid that the United States provided to develop its own military-industrial complex, and then market those weapons back to the United States and its EU counterparts. Israel’s sophisticated spyware technology, surveillance and weapons systems, and even police tactics are marketed as having been “battle tested.” That it was against a largely defenseless and hostage Palestinian population was not included in the marketing.

Both in Palestine and along the U.S.-Mexico border, the infrastructure and even the rhetoric of colonization is insidious. There is no “over there” with colonialism and empire. It always comes back home. When the military contractors run out of foreign battlefields to deploy their

products, they deploy them domestically, and what better marketing strategy for doing so than the ever-useful specters of “terror” and “invasion” by poor people.

This realization places certain demands on one’s conscience. Can we engage in direct action and work to dismantle oppressive systems while simultaneously building the scaffolding that people can stand on to peer over the walls, tear them down, and create a better-informed and more just society?

In 2021, I and others created the Palestine Podcast Academy as an effort to engage with that question. The PPA connects Palestinian women in Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank in teams to learn the fundamentals of podcast production in English and Arabic. Beyond providing media training we also create jobs for our all-female team of Palestinian facilitators and translators. Finally, we create connections by bringing together individuals and institutions from across Palestine to overcome the artificial barriers that have been erected to keep them isolated from their own communities.

The Palestine Podcast Academy now has a diverse board from all over the world, with decades of collective experience working on human rights in Palestine. Once, as I was walking back towards the U.S. side of the border from Nogales, Mexico, I saw a hastily-painted message plastered across a section of the U.S. border fence: “Las fronteras son cicatrices en la tierra” (“borders are scars on the earth”). Before our borders can scar the earth they must first build a foundation in our minds.

Let us stand up for all those living under the long shadow of oppression and walls of separation. and constantly ask ourselves how we might be participating in it. We must balance our struggle to aid others in their liberation with the struggle to liberate ourselves from our own ignorance and assumptions.

In solidarity, from México to Palestine, *Sustaining our truly grassroots and liberatory media-training and solidarity campaign requires grassroots support. Learn how you can support us at LatitudeAdjustmentPod.com.*

Eric Maddox is the host of the Latitude Adjustment Podcast and the founder/director of the Palestine Podcast Academy.

