

Anti-Imperialist News Service

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**Anti-Imperialist
News Service**

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Haitian Demonstrations Against Foreign Occupation

On May 18, the 202nd anniversary of the creation of the Haitian flag, tens of thousands of people throughout the country joined in demonstrations to demand an end to foreign military occupation and restoration of the constitutional government, headed by President Aristide.

In the capitol city of Port-au-Prince, huge numbers of people, especially from the poor neighborhoods such as Cite Soleil, Belair, Carrefour, La Saline, etc., joined in a central march, considered one of the biggest demonstrations since the U.S. invasion and occupation on February 29, 2004. At the end of the demonstration, the Haitian National police opened fire on marchers returning to the Cite Soleil neighborhood, killing at least one person.



Haitians demonstrate in Port au Prince on May 18, 2005.

Several thousand Haitians also rallied in Cap Haitien; speakers at the demonstration denounced the U.S. and France for their war and occupation. On May 16, a demonstration of several thousands was organized in Limbe under the slogan: "Down with the Occupation!" Other Flag day demonstrations against the occupation were organized in cities and towns across Haiti.

25th Anniversary of Historic Gwangju People's Uprising

On May 22, about 50 people in Chicago attended a meeting organized as part of the North American speaking tour to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Historic Gwangju People's Uprising. The meeting was coordinated by the Korea Truth Commission.

The meeting was addressed by two speakers from Gwangju who had participated in the events of May 18, 1980 when the people rose up to liberate their city from the U.S.-backed military dictatorship of General Chun Doo Hwan. On orders from U.S. military leaders, the uprising was suppressed with brutal force; as many as 2,000 people were killed. Today, May 18 is a national holiday in Korea commemorating the Gwangju Peoples Uprising as a source of inspiration for activists around the world and a point of unity for the Korean people.

Both speakers talked of their experiences during the uprising and recounted some of the

brutal suppression inflicted on the people, including the murder of children and college students. Both speakers exposed the role of the U.S. government in this repression.

In addition, the speakers discussed current U.S.-Korea relations, and emphasized that the threat of war, including even possible nuclear war, is very real and continues to escalate due to the hostile policy of the U. S. government. They spoke out against the U.S. military occupation of south Korea as well as against U.S. pressure and threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). The speakers defended the policies of the DPRK to protect itself against the danger of U.S. aggression and called for the peaceful reunification of Korean on the basis of will of the Korean people themselves, free from any outside interference. They specifically called for the U.S. govern-

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New U.S. Military Operations in Iraq

Faced with a rising level of resistance from the Iraqi people, the U.S. launched a new military offensive in western Iraq on May 22, and is planning another for Baghdad.

Earlier this week, over 1,000 U.S. troops launched an offensive in Iraq's Anbar province, near the city of Haditha, 140 miles northwest of Baghdad. The offensive was the second in the region in less than a month, and already the U. S. has killed hundreds of Iraqis, including many children. Numerous U.S. troops have also been killed as part of the offensive during the past week.

On May 25, U.S. military commanders also revealed that a largescale offensive, the biggest since the U.S. invasion

over two years ago, will soon be launched in order "to crush the Baghdad insurgency." The offensive, named "Operation Lightning," will use tens of thousands of U. S. and Iraqi troops to encircle Baghdad with "an impenetrable blockade."

According to the plan, 675 fixed military checkpoints, plus mobile ones, will be setup around the capital. "We will divide Baghdad into seven main areas, and the number of the forces who will take part in the operation from the interior and the defense ministry will be more than 40,000 security men," an Iraqi military official commented. "We will also impose a concrete blockade around Baghdad, like a bracelet around an arm, God willing, and God be with us in our crackdown...No one will be able to penetrate this blockade," he said.

U. S. Military to Build Four Giant New Bases in Iraq

On May 23, the Pentagon stated that the U.S. is planning to build "four giant military bases" in Iraq, consolidating over 100 others now scattered throughout the country.

The plan will require the construction of more permanent structures such as blast-proof barracks and offices, according to military officials.

One U.S. official stated that U.S. troops would "gradually concentrate inside four heavily fortified air bases, from where they would provide logistical support and quick reaction capability where necessary. The bases would be situated in the north, south, west and center of the country."

U. S. Signs Military "Partnership" With Afghanistan

On May 23, the U.S. signed a "memorandum of understanding" with Afghanistan, calling for a long-term U.S. military presence in the country.

Under the new "strategic partnership," the U.S. will keep its largescale military posts at Bagram airbase north of Kabul and at Kandahar airbase in the south, as well as other military facilities that "may be mutually determined." The U.S. will also continue training and equipping Afghan police and soldiers, and thousands of U. S. troops will maintain their occupation of Afghanistan under the agreement. Currently, the Pentagon commands a foreign force in Afghanistan of about 18,000 troops, most of them U.S. soldiers.

The treaty also states that :

* The U.S. will "continue to have the freedom of action required to conduct appropriate military operations."

* There will be consultations "with respect to taking appropriate measures in the event that Afghanistan perceives that its territorial integrity, independence, or security is threatened or at risk."

* The U.S. will assist the Afghan government with "counter-terrorism operations."

* The U.S. will continue "intelligence sharing, strengthen Afghanistan's ties with NATO, and support border security initiatives."

* The U.S. will encourage the development of "a legal and institutional framework for a thriving private sector and an environment favorable to international investment in Afghanistan."

During discussions with Afghan leader Karzai, President Bush also ruled out a request for Afghan sovereignty, stating that the U.S. would not hand over command of U.S.

Gwangju Uprising (continued from page 1)

ment to 1) end its hostile policy; 2) sign a peace treaty with the DPRK and 3) normalize relations with it.

After the speakers finished their presentations, participants in the meeting all posed for a group photo, and were then invited to stay for informal discussion and food.

For over an hour, the participants discussed how to advance friendly relations between the people of the U.S. and Korea. A photo exhibition of the Gwangju uprising, as well as a video presentation made during the meeting, enabled participants to vividly experience the history and tragedy of the Gwangju uprising.

The Chicago stop was only one of many made by the North American Speaking Tour which began on May 12 and will continue through June 3rd, visiting more than a dozen U.S. and Canadian cities.

(for more information visit www.KoreaTruth.org)

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Venezuela Says Transnational Oil Companies Owe Back Taxes and Have Violated Contracts

The following is excerpted from an article by Sarah Wagner and Gregory Wilpert in Venezuelanalysis.com.

Caracas, Venezuela, May 25, 2005

Venezuela's Minister of Energy and Mines, Rafael Ramírez, appeared before the Venezuelan National Assembly today in order to expose the abuses committed by transnational corporations in Venezuela's oil sector and to inform the Venezuelan people that with the opening of the petroleum industry to foreign companies, during the 1990's, "a true assault was carried out against Venezuelan petroleum."

Ramírez explained that over the course of the past decade and a half, foreign investment amounted to an assault "coordinated by international institutions of oil consuming nations and the large transnationals, who in complicity of the oligarchy and their political representatives conspired against the Venezuelan state, causing their subsequent economic and social crisis."

Afghanistan (continued from page 2)

troops to Afghan military leaders. "Our troops will respond to U. S. commanders," Mr Bush told journalists.

Torture and Murder of Afghanistan Prisoners

The Afghan request for control over U.S. soldiers came amidst new revelations of torture and murder of prisoners at U.S. bases.

On May 20, the New York Times reported that an Army internal investigation (2,000 pages long) revealed that Afghan prisoners were tortured to death by American interrogators and prison guards at Bagram air base, outside Kabul. The investigation detailed how two prisoners were kept chained in excruciating positions and then kicked to death. According to the report, there existed "a culture of abuse at Bagram." Eight Afghan prisoners have so far died in U.S. custody in Afghanistan.

In sworn statements, U.S. soldiers tell of a woman interrogator "with a taste for humiliation" who stepped on the neck of one detainee and kicked another in the genitals. They also tell of one soldier, an interrogator called "Monster" -- he had the word tattooed in Italian across his chest -- who one sergeant praised as the "king of torture." Another prisoner was locked in an isolation cell with his hands shackled to the wire ceiling over his head and then kicked to death over several days.

In a joint news conference with Afghan President Karzai, Bush dismissed Karzai's demand that Afghan prisoners held by the U.S. be turned over to the Afghan government.

Ramírez, who is also the President of Venezuela's state owned petroleum company, PdVSA, offered his testimony before a Special Commission that has been formed to investigate the irregularities detected by the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum in the drawing up and the execution of service agreements. These service agreements, signed between the former management of PdVSA and transnational oil companies, such as Chevron Texaco, Royal Dutch Shell, Total, and Repsol, were signed between 1992 and 1997, the years of years of the so-called "petroleum opening."

Currently transnational oil companies produce about 500,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) via these service agreements and another 600,000 bpd of extra-heavy oil as part of joint ventures with PdVSA, in the Orinoco Oil Belt. According to the Ministry of Energy and Mines, PdVSA produces the remaining 2 million bpd, for a Venezuelan total of about 3.2 million bpd...

In the course of renegotiating the 32 service agreements, it has come to light that, according to Ramírez, 90% of the transnationals have committed tax evasion, cheating the Venezuelan state out of \$3 billion in taxes and \$1 billion in royalties. "Some of these companies haven't paid taxes for years," said Ramirez, adding, "They are mocking our laws. This is an unacceptable situation. We can't permit this."

"As we will see, this is not about isolated or fortuitous incidents," Ramírez assured, affirming that on the contrary, "this is a strategy that unfolded since the nationalization of PdVSA in 1976 and is oriented towards taking control over PdVSA for transnational interests." Ramirez summarized the essence of the "well planned and designed," petroleum opening as a "Trojan Horse."

In October of last year, the Chavez government announced that transnational oil companies that had service agreements with PdVSA that were signed in the 1990's, must now be converted into joint ventures, in which foreign companies are limited to a 49% stake in any project, reserving the majority share for PdVSA. Also, in April of this year, the Venezuelan government raised the royalties that companies in the Orinoco Oil Belt must pay, from 1% to 16%. So far all oil companies operating in Venezuela, except for ExxonMobil, have accepted the new terms.

Ramírez asserted that "with the petroleum opening, the transnational capital tried to expropriate the handling and the sovereign use of our main natural resource: petroleum," converting it from a natural resource of the Venezuelan state into a natural resource at the disposal of the consumer countries of the world.

According to the PdVSA president, the collapse of Venezuela's oil revenue in the 1990's is attributable to earlier government efforts to sweep away state control over the oil industry. "They were prepared to turn over our energy resources to transnational capital and to yield it to privatization and those who wanted to impose their version of globalization on Venezuela," he said.

Concluding Statement by H.E. Dr. M. Javad Zarif, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN, at the 2005 NPT Review Conference (excerpts)

New York, May 27, 2005

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
Mr. President,

When in 1995, a consensus was achieved around the principles and objectives governing the indefinite extension of the Treaty, it was based, inter alia, on a solemn undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to pursue systematic efforts to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. The States-Parties were assured that from thereon accountability would become the corner stone of the NPT.

The 2000 Review Conference, in spite of indications to the contrary, was able to take a historic step forward. The thirteen distinct demands from non-nuclear weapon states and unequivocal undertaking by nuclear weapons states mapped the road towards nuclear disarmament. The expectation reasonably drawn was that come the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty, nuclear weapons and stockpile would only be a part of history.

We were all right to assume the preparatory process would lead step by step to a conclusion here that would serve the principles and objectives of the Treaty and strengthen the drive for elimination of nuclear weapons. 2005 could and should have been a turning point towards a world free from the scourge of nuclear threat.

That the 2005 Conference ended without result despite the sincere efforts and good intentions of you and a great majority of States Parties from all corners of the world is not by itself detrimental. Serious is the intentions and actions rigorously pursued by the presumed remaining super power without the slightest regard for the concerns of the rest of the international community. Policies and practices formulated and pursued by the United States during the last five years clearly indicate what lies ahead if they remain unchecked. Allow me to briefly give a few examples:

1. The United States adopted its Nuclear Posture Review, incorporating the breach of the obligations on "irreversibility", "diminished role of nuclear weapons" and "lowering the operational status of nuclear weapons" by: - Stressing the essential role of nuclear weapons as an effective tool for achieving security ends and foreign policy objectives; - Developing new nuclear weapon system, and constructing new facilities for producing nuclear weapons, - Resuming efforts to develop and deploy tactical nuclear weapons despite the commitment to reverse this process and effectively reduce them; - Targeting non-nuclear weapon States Parties to the Treaty and planning to attack those States.

2. The United States replaced the principle of destruction, perceived as the most fundamental element in the process of nuclear disarmament, with a policy of decommissioning.

3. The United States abrogated the ABM Treaty, recognized by the International Community as the cornerstone of

global strategic stability, through its unilateral withdrawal from the Treaty and thus creating a strategic and security gap within the overall global nuclear posture with grave and long term consequences for the whole world.

4. The United States continued the deployment of nuclear forces in other territories raising serious concerns over the command and control of such weapons. Furthermore, integration of such deployments into the military infrastructures of the host states through inter alia training of their pilots to deploy such weapons constitute clear violation of Article I of the Treaty. Preservation of security and safety of such weapons in these territories in the circumstances that non-state actors could have access to the weapons have created a sense of necessity for the host states to consider to request the US to withdraw such forces from their territories.

5. The United States continued to provide nuclear umbrella for non-nuclear weapon States Parties to the Treaty in flagrant violation of Articles I and II of the Treaty by the United States and countries hosting such weaponry.

6. The United States signed an agreement of nuclear cooperation with Israel, whose nuclear arsenal presents the gravest danger to the peace and stability of the Middle East, providing Israeli scientists access to its nuclear facilities, thereby demonstrating its total disregard for its obligations under Article I of the Treaty.

7. The United States rejected the CTBT, not only damaging the prospect of the entry into force of the Treaty, but also undermining the promotion and upholding of the Treaty in international fora.

8. The United States rejected the inclusion of the element of "verifiability" in a future cut-off treaty, thereby breaking a long standing position of the International Community on a consensus over the negotiating mandate in the Conference on Disarmament.

The extremist attitude reflected in these documents and practices seems to have learned no lesson from the nightmare of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If history is any guide, nuclear arms, Ladies and Gentlemen, are in the most dangerous hands. It is imperative therefore, to move now with a concerted and firm resolve to stop and reverse this fast pace drive. Nuclear weapons should not imply political clout and capability to shape and influence world events. Holding on and expanding nuclear arsenal should be condemned rather than condoned or tolerated. Any increase in nuclear capability should equal a reduction in political credibility. The abysmal record, achieved unilaterally by the United States in the short span of five years, testifies to a mentality which seeks solutions solely through demonstration of power. It is no wonder that the US tried to create smokescreens in this Conference to deflect attention from its abysmal record.