

# Anti-Imperialist News Service

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## Panel Refutes Bush Justification for Iraq War

On June 16, the independent commission investigating the September 11 attacks concluded that there was "no credible evidence" that Saddam Hussein helped al-Qaida target the United States. The panel stated that although Osama bin Laden asked for help from Iraq in the mid-1990s, Hussein's government never responded.

These findings directly contradict previous statements from the Bush administration which repeatedly claimed links between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida, and cited them as justification for launching the invasion of Iraq.

In Bush's State of the Union address in 2003 prior to the invasion, for example, he stated "Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaeda." Vice-President Cheney repeated this argument, and stated before the war that Saddam Hussein "has an established relationship with al-Qaeda, providing training to al-Qaeda members in the areas of poisons, gases, making conventional bombs." In January of this year, Cheney again said "there's overwhelming evidence" of an Iraq-al Qaeda connection and....there was an established relationship."

Although the entire world has known for a long time that the Bush administration was merely using such arguments as a justification for war, the findings of the commission further expose the lies of the U. S. government. The so-called "al-Qaida link," like the "weapons of mass destruction threat," was a blatant lie used by Bush as a pretext for the invasion.

Now that these lies are completely revealed, the Bush administration not only refuses to acknowledge the war as a crime of monumental proportions, but continues the war and occupation and threatens other countries with similar "pre-emptive" wars.

Of course the Bush administration has no plans to admit guilt because the real motives

behind this aggressive, imperialist war are the economic and strategic interests of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class. The U.S. capitalists want to control the vast oil wealth and dominate the important Middle East region. All along Bush has made it clear that the real goals of this war were to establish a "free market system" in Iraq and a U.S.-dictated political system.

No, the lies and excuses can never cover up the fact that the war against Iraq was an aggressive war which trampled underfoot international law and the sovereignty of countries. It was and remains today an imperialist war.

## Sending More Troops To War

On June 17, the Senate, with a nearly unanimous voice (93 to 4), voted to enroll 20,000 more soldiers into the Army, bringing its authorized troop strength to 502,400. The House of Representatives has already approved a similar measure.

Senators from both the Republican and Democratic parties said that the additional troops are needed to sustain the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Senate vote took place as Congress prepares to authorize more than \$450 billion for next year's military budget.

The U.S. already has more than 150,000 troops in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan along with tens of thousands of civilians contracted to the military and thousands of mercenaries. Altogether more than 500,000 U.S. military personnel are deployed overseas in 132 countries.

The Senate vote again shows that the government is going full steam ahead with its war program.

Everything in our country — the lives of our sons and daughters, our tax dollars, our civil liberties, etc. — are being devoured by this war program.

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## U. S. Behind Human Rights Abuses in Colombia

*Below we excerpt an interview conducted by the New Colombia News Agency (ANNCOL) with Yenly Angélica Méndez, a human rights activist in Colombia.*

ANNCOL: What is going on today in the Arauca department?

Méndez: For the inhabitants of Arauca, the human rights situation has become more critical due to the choice of Arauca as a "laboratory" for the so called "Democratic Security" policy of the current Colombian administration.

— As in the rest of the country, this has meant the strengthening of the Armed Forces through the direct intervention of the government of the United States. At the end of 2002, during a visit to Arauca, the ambassador of the United States announced the donation of 98 million dollars to the XVIII Brigade, to be used for the protection of the Caño Limón oil pipeline. Also, more than 60 US Marines are in Arauca, training the troops.

### ***New Book Available!***

#### **“Only the Peoples Can Stop the Wars: A Program for Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism’s “War on Terrorism”**

In this book, Michael Thorburn, a leader of the Workers Party, U.S.A., offers an in-depth analysis of the concrete features and roots of the so-called “war on terrorism.” The author focuses the reader’s attention on the vital question of how to advance the anti-war struggle.

The first chapter looks at the continuing U.S. wars and occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq and places these in the context of U.S. imperialism’s strategy to establish itself as the sole superpower based on the doctrine that Might Makes Right.

Chapter Two reports on the growing anti-war actions and initiatives of the American people. It zeros in on the issue of building up a proactive peace movement. The author puts forward the program for a genuinely democratic foreign policy and elaborates the strategy and tactics of anti-imperialist politics.

The final chapter looks into other important fronts of the U.S. government’s war program — in Palestine, Korea, Colombia, the Philippines and elsewhere. All the articles and speeches collected in this book were written as part of the day-to-day work of mobilizing people against war and militarism. For this reason, the book is imbued with the spirit of struggle. It is indeed a call to all of us to get organized in the struggle against war and imperialism.

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— Since the start of the present administration human rights violations in Arauca have risen about 100 per cent. The primary victims have been the social movements, who at the moment have more than 10 leaders jailed, primarily those with a record of uncompromising and dedicated protest against human rights violations, and of promoting a model of alternative development in face of the lack of government policies and initiatives of this kind.

— Without the leaders, who were imprisoned massively in November 2002, August 2003 and February 2004, the voice of the victims is being throttled, and the way has been paved for the increase in human rights violations and rise in judicial impunity, thus accomplishing the purpose of these arrests....

ANNCOL: Are soldiers of the United States involved in human rights violations?

Méndez: The United States plays a primary role in the violation of human rights in Arauca, principally because they promote and finance the policy of “Democratic Security” and because, as I’ve already said, they give large amounts of aid to the XVIII Brigade in Arauca, despite the prohibition against giving aid to military units who are involved in human rights violations. This Brigade is involved in many human rights violations and this aid is used to continue them.

— Additionally, US troops are stationed in Arauca, to train the Colombian troops. The civil population and the social movements of Arauca suffer the results of this training daily.

— But the clearest case of US responsibility in human rights violations is the bombardment of the village of Santo Domingo in Tame in December 1998, when a United States airplane operated by the euphemistically named US “private contractors”, provide the tactical intelligence for the Colombian Air Force helicopters who were bombing the village, killing 17 people, including 9 children.

ANNCOL: What role do the foreign oil companies play?

Méndez: Oxy has been exploiting the Caño Limón oil field for 20 years, causing a grave deterioration of the environment. The Lipa lake has been completely degraded, and the Guahiba Indian community who had their sanctuary at his lake had to abandon it. At the same time the safe guarding of this oil resource for the sake of this company, ahead of dignity of the lives of the inhabitants of Arauca, is the cause of the assault on this region.

The Spanish corporation Repsol has also appeared in Arauca, and is drilling a new oil field known as Capachos, located in Tame — the municipality where the paramilitaries are currently consolidating a foot hold....

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## Fidel Castro's Message to the United Nations (continued from page 4)

for purely objective reasons.

After tens of thousands of years, humanity has reached at this minute — and almost unexpectedly given the accelerated pace of the last 45 years when it more than doubled — a population of 6,350 millions and these people must be provided with dress, shoes, food, shelter and education. That figure will almost inevitably grow to 10 billion within hardly 50 more years. By then, both the proven and the unproven fuel reserves that it took the planet 300 million years to build will no longer exist as they will have been thrown to the atmosphere, the waters and the soils together with other chemical pollutants.

The imperialist system that prevails today, towards which the developed capitalist society unavoidably evolved, has already come to such a ruthlessly irrational and unfair world economic and neoliberal order that it is unsustainable. Many peoples will rebel against it.

In fact, they have already begun to rebel. It is stupid to say that this is the work of parties, ideologies or subversive and destabilizing agents from Cuba and Venezuela....

Soon it will be 60 years to the day that the first nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. There are tens of thousands of such weapons in the world today, which are scores of times more powerful and accurate; and they continue to be produced and perfected. There are even programs for nuclear missile bases in outer space. New more sophisticated and deadly arm systems are being produced.

For the first time in history man would have created the technical capacity for its own destruction. However, it has not been capable of creating a minimum of guarantees for the safety and integrity of every country, on equal footing. Theories are elaborated and even applied with respect to the pre-emptive and surprise use of the most sophisticated weapons, "in any dark corner of the world", "in 60 or more countries", that make the barbaric claims of the darkest days of Nazism go pale. We have already seen wars of conquests, and sadistic methods of torture that bring back to memory the images showed at the end of the II World War.

The United Nations prestige is being undermined to its very foundations. Far from being perfected and democratized, this institution has been left as an instrument that the superpower and its allies intend to use only to provide coverage to war adventures and appalling crimes against the most sacred rights of the peoples.

This is no fantasy or simply imagining things. It is a fact that in barely half a century two great mortal dangers have emerged that threaten the very survival of the species: one that derives from the technological development of weapons and the other coming from the systematic and accelerated destruction of natural conditions for life on

the planet.

The dilemma into which humanity has been dragged by the system is such that there is no option now: either the present world situation changes or the species runs a real risk of extinction. You do not need to be a scientist or an expert in mathematics to understand this as the simple arithmetic taught to grammar school children would suffice.

The peoples will become ungovernable, and no repression, torture, disappearances or massive murders will stop them. Not only will the hungry of the Third World be in the struggle for their own survival and that of their children, but also the conscientious people from the rich world, both manual and intellectual workers.

It will be from the inevitable crisis that rather sooner than later thinkers, leaders, social and political organizations of all shades will emerge that will do their utmost to preserve the species. All the waters will converge in one direction sweeping away all obstacles.

Let's plant ideas, and there will be no need for all the weapons created by this barbaric civilization; let's plant ideas, and the irreparable destruction of our natural habitat will be prevented.

The question stands, is it not too late? I am an optimist, I say no, and I share the hope that a better world is possible.

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# Fidel Castro's Message to the 11th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

*Below we excerpt part of a letter sent on June 13 by Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the State Council of the Republic of Cuba, to the 11th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.*

International trade has not been an instrument for the development of the poor countries that today make up the overwhelming majority of mankind. For 86 of them, basic commodities account for over half of their export revenues. Meanwhile, the purchasing power of such products, except oil, is now less than one third of what it was at the time of UNCTAD's inception.

Although figures tend to be repetitive and boring, oftentimes it becomes unavoidable to use their eloquent and irreplaceable language.

— 85% of the world population lives in the poor countries but their share of international trade is only 25%.

— These countries' external debt was close to 50 billion USD in 1964, the year this United Nations agency was born, while today it is 2.6 trillion.

— Between 1982 and 2003, that is, in 21 years the poor world paid 5.4 trillion USD in debt service, which means that its present sum has been paid to the rich countries more than twice.

The poor countries were promised development aid and the steady reduction of the gap between the rich and the poor; they were even promised that it would reach 0.7% of the so-called GDP of those economically developed, a figure that if true would amount today to no less than 175 billion USD annually.

What the Third World received as official development aid in 2003 was only 54 billion USD. That same year, the poor paid to the rich 436 billion in debt service and the richest of them all, the United States of America, was the one farther from meeting the set goal, as it allocated only 0.1% of its GDP to that aid. And this leaves out the enormous amounts taken away as a result of the unequal terms of trade.

In addition, the rich countries spend every year 300 billion USD on subsidies that prevent the poor countries' access to their markets.

On the other hand, it is practically impossible to measure the damage brought upon those countries by the kind of trade relations that, through the sinuous roads of the WTO and the Free Trade Agreements, are imposed on the poor countries, which are unable to compete with the sophisticated technology, the almost absolute monopoly over intellectual property and the immense financial resources of the rich countries.

Other forms of plundering that add to this are the gross exploitation of the cheap labor force in assembly plants that come and go at light speed; the currency speculation in the

range of trillion dollars every day; arms trade; the seizure of goods belonging to the national cultural heritage; the cultural invasion as well as other actions related to theft and pillage that it would be impossible to list here. The classic books on economics do not show the most brutal transference of financial resources from the poor to the rich countries, as it has not been studied yet, that is, the flight of capital which is a must that characterizes the prevailing world order.

Everybody's money escapes to the United States to protect itself from the monetary instability and the speculative frenzy brought about by the same economic order. Without this gift that the rest of the world, mostly the poor, makes to the United States, it would be impossible for the present administration to withstand its enormous fiscal and trade deficits that in the year 2004 amount to no less than 1 trillion dollars.

Would anyone dare to deny the social and human consequences of the neoliberal globalization imposed on the world?

— If 25 years ago five hundred million people were going hungry, today over 800 million are starving.

— In the poor countries, 150 million children are born underweight, which raises their risks of death as well as of mental and physical underdevelopment.

— 325 million children do not attend school.

— Infant mortality rate under one year is 12 times higher than it is in the rich countries.

— 33 thousand children die every day in the Third World of curable illnesses.

— Two million girls are forced into prostitution.

— 85 percent of the world population made up by poor countries consumes only 30 percent of the energy, 25 percent of the metals and 15 percent of the timber.

— There are billions of full illiterates or functional illiterates on the planet.

How can the imperialist leaders and those who share in the plundering of the world speak of human rights and even use such words as freedom and democracy in this brutally exploited world?

A permanent crime of genocide is being committed against mankind.

The number of children, mothers, adolescents, youths and adults who could be saved and die every year for lack of food, medical care and medicines is similar to the tens of millions who perished in any of the two world wars. This is happening every day, every hour, while none of the great leaders of the developed and rich world say a single word about it.

Can this situation go on forever? Definitely not, and

*Continued on page 3*