

US-LED WAR, MILITARISM AND NEO-FASCISM

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. IS TRUMP ESCALATING US MILITARISM AND WAR?

Barely 100 days into the Trump presidency, the US government aggressively continues its imperialist wars of aggression and intervention abroad and intensified repression at home. It is a desperate attempt to maintain its superpower hegemony in a crisis-laden multipolar world.

In March alone, more than 1,000 civilians died as a result of air strikes by the so-called US-led Coalition in Iraq and Syria. Trump ordered more bombs dropped in Yemen in just one week in March than Obama had done in a year.

On April 5, Trump ordered 59 Tomahawk missiles to be fired into a Syrian airbase based on a false pretext, killing scores of civilians

in a nearby village. One month before that, US drones fired Hellfire missiles and dropped a bomb on a mosque in West Aleppo where 200 people were praying, killing 40 and injuring another 120.

On April 13, the US dropped the most powerful non-nuclear bomb available in its military arsenal on a complex of caves and tunnels in Afghanistan supposedly being used by ISIS terrorists. This is the first time that the GBU-43 Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb, known as the “mother of all bombs,” has been used in combat. The MOAB’s intensive blast wave can obliterate anyone caught within its one-mile blast radius and ignite the oxygen in underground spaces, like tunnels or caves.

Trump has relaxed the rules of engagement by the US military in

Greater awareness must be translated to more and higher levels of action to further expose and stop imperialist wars and militarism.

There is a need to establish and strengthen links among progressive anti-war groups, and between anti-war groups and resistance movements in countries under attack. There is a need to build a global anti-war and social justice movement that opposes militarism and wars of aggression; respects the right to self-determination of oppressed peoples; and supports various forms of resistance to imperialist aggression and intervention.

The International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) is also calling for a global day of action against US war, militarism and fascism on two dates: May 25, 2017 (NATO Summit) and August 7, 2017 (end of the anti-war conference and commemorating the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki).

We should also call on our governments to: Demilitarize the current hotspots of armed conflict (South China Sea, Korean Peninsula, Kashmir, etc.)

The upcoming conference, "Solidarity and Fightback: Building Resistance to US-led War, Militarism and Neofascism", organized by the International League of Peoples' Struggles and the International Women's Alliance is an important initiative in this regard. This will be held in Toronto, Canada on August 5-7, 2017.

- Decommission weapons of mass destruction
- Reduce weapons production, exportation and importation
- Redirect public spending to meet human and environmental needs
- Convert military-based industries and facilities to provide for civilian needs
- Adopt and promote non-military responses to counter military threats
- Discourage the glorification of war, militarism and macho culture in schools, media and popular culture

It is also necessary to support and join the global campaign of the Ban the Bases Network to dismantle the global chain of U.S. bases and rescind agreements that allow U.S. forces access to military facilities of other countries. Linked to this is the call for a moratorium on military

Somalia that is bound to result in the increase of civilian casualties. The US has been conducting a shadow war against so-called Islamists since 2007 in the strategically-located country at the Horn of Africa using Ethiopia as proxy. Obama had regularly used drones from US bases in neighboring Djibouti to strike at al-Shabab militants.

Trump has boasted of sending what he calls an "armada" of battleships to intimidate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and has threatened to make a preemptive nuclear strike against that country.

All the saber-rattling and bellicose actions coming from the US are not a sign of strength and confidence but of an imperialist power on a steep decline. This waning superpower is becoming more reckless and aggressive in the use of naked force in a vain attempt to retain its hegemonic position.

2. WHAT IS PROPELLING THIS DRIVE TO ESCALATE IMPERIALIST WARS AND MILITARISM?

Four decades of neoliberal restructuring of the global economy generated enormous wealth for the financial oligarchy but intensified the exploitation and dispossession of working families all over the

world. Debt-driven consumption and asset inflation, which were the norm before the eruption of the crisis, could no longer offset the crisis of overproduction wherein the impoverished masses could not afford the surfeit of goods churned out by capitalist production. These even worsened the overaccumulation of capital until the bubble burst with the subprime mortgage crisis in 2007. The global economy has been trapped in a protracted depression ever since.

The protracted economic crisis of the global capitalist system is now intensifying geopolitical struggles and social conflicts all over the world. Imperialist states, led by the U.S., are becoming ever more aggressive in capturing and controlling more territories as sources of raw materials and low-cost labor, as captive markets and supply routes, and as launching pads for projecting military force overseas. As neoliberalism plunges deeper into crisis, militarism – the reliance of states on military means to achieve the purposes of domestic governance and external relations – is on the rampage in every continent today.

U.S. imperialism stands as the principal purveyor of militarism and war, and the biggest destabilizing factor in the world today. The

U.S. sees the emergence of new powers such as Russia and China in a multipolar world as a threat to its global hegemony. The US is worried by the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as an alliance to counter the US-NATO alliance, as well as the establishment of the BRICS economic bloc made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. China is also pursuing its own regional trade accord, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which excludes the United States, as well as new financial institutions to rival the global financial architecture dominated by US finance capital.

3. HOW IS US IMPERIALISM WAGING A GLOBAL WAR OF TERROR?

To preserve its global dominance the U.S. has proceeded to unleash wars of terror throughout the world under the guise of waging a global "war on terror." Together with its NATO allies, the Zionist State of Israel and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the U.S. has deliberately stoked sectarian divisions in West Asia and North Africa and has sought to destroy or weaken any regime that upholds the cause of national independence and self-determination of the Arab peoples.



which would carry fracked oil from the Bakken shale in North Dakota across several states and under the Missouri River.

There have been dozens of arrests, tear gas and dog attacks and violent dispersals by police and militia. While the battle is far from over, with Trump promising to support the DAPL, the protestors won a halt to construction of the pipeline along its present route.

The Standing Rock indigenous-led struggle is part of a number of such worldwide battles to confront and tame the fossil fuel giants and other extractivist monopolies in the face of growing militarization of indigenous territories.

10. WHAT CAN WE DO TO STOP US WARS, MILITARISM AND NEOFASCISM?

In the face of escalating wars and militarization, there is an urgent need to raise public awareness, strengthen solidarity and multiply actions against militarism, imperialist wars of aggression and intervention.

Peace and justice activists can help by conducting far-reaching information and education campaigns to raise public awareness and deepen understanding of the major aspects and current trends in militarization and neofascism.

in South Korea as well as in the Philippines.

There is also rising resistance in Africa, as in Latin America and elsewhere to transnational

corporations scooping up farmland and resources with the aid of military or paramilitary forces. In Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, and elsewhere, workers and social movements are condemning and opposing US intervention and destabilization attempts.

Even in the U.S. and other imperialist countries, the people are increasingly opposed to the wars that their governments are waging in their name. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets across the US immediately following the announcement of the Presidential win of Donald Trump. As the ILPS USA chapter stated: "This indicates the people in the United States are not paralyzed by fear, nor are we willing to tolerate fascism and state repression. We must organize to ensure this fight back movement is sustained and advanced."

Recent months have also seen a resurgence of the African American people's progressive and revolutionary organizations working for the self-determination of black people in the United States. This includes the ongoing mass movement Black Lives Matter and events marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party.

Hundreds of thousands have protested the fact that one out of three African-Americans is in prison and are thus being used as the main fodder and modern-day slave labor for the increasingly privatized prison industrial complex.

They are likewise protesting the fact that US cops accost African-Americans and shoot down many of them, killing an African-American every 28 hours.

In North Dakota, the Standing Rock Sioux nation, along with 200 other Native nations and up to 7000 people from all over the world, have stood firm to block the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL),

Gen. Wesley Clark, former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO during the Kosovo War, revealed that within a few weeks of the 9/11 bombings in the U.S., the Pentagon issued a classified memo that "describes how we're going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran." Since then, U.S. and its allies have indeed bombed, invaded or occupied all of these countries except Lebanon and Iran, but also added Afghanistan and Yemen to the list. Washington also committed \$38 billion over the next decade to sustain Israel's apartheid policies and brutal occupation of Palestine.

Across the African continent, US-led militarization has escalated over the last two administrations of Obama and his predecessor, President George W. Bush, Jr. and will undoubtedly continue under Trump. The founding of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) in early 2008 has led to instability and displacement on the continent.

As Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor of the Pan-African News Wire (Nov. 2016) points out: "The bombing of Libya under false pretenses, its destabilization and brutal assassination of longtime leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi can still be felt. (...) Today Libya has become a major source of human trafficking and flight from the African continent across the Mediterranean into Europe. Pentagon bombing operations are being conducted on a daily basis in this North African state. Several attempts by Washington and its allies to create a stable neo-colonial dominated regime in Tripoli have failed miserably. (...)"

In Djibouti, a burgeoning military base at Camp Lemonnier is serving as a staging ground for an ongoing air and ground campaign under the guise of fighting "Islamic terrorism" in the Horn of Africa. The Republic of Sudan, once the largest nation-state in Africa in terms of land area, was partitioned at the aegis of Washington in order to undermine the emerging country's oil industry that was in partnership with the People's Republic of China.

In the Asia-Pacific, the US is continuing its "Pivot to Asia" policy of deploying up to 60 percent of its Naval assets in the region in order to contain China and isolate North Korea. The U.S. Pacific Command initiated 175 bilateral and multilateral military exercises in the Asia-Pacific region in 2015, up from 160 in 2014. These joint exercises are not only increasing in frequency, but also diversifying in terms of the types of operations. They now include ground warfare,

aerial warfare, maritime warfare, anti-missile warfare, special operations, as well as electronic and cyber warfare.

While targeting North Korea's nuclear program, the US military stocks nuclear weapons in South Korea. The US is using South Korea as the launch pad for the Pentagon's Terminal High Altitude Air Defense system, known as THAAD, ostensibly aimed at North Korea, but also targeting China. The US and South Korea launched their largest-ever military exercise on the Korean peninsula last March 2017, involving more than 320,000 military personnel backed by the most advanced US air and naval power. These exercises simulate scenarios for the use of US anti-missile assets and special warfare forces to "decapitate" North Korea's leadership and take down the country's nuclear weapons.

Confronted with this grave threat, it is not unreasonable for North Korea's leadership to think that the country's nuclear weapons is the best deterrent they have to an actual invasion or attack as the US did in Afghanistan, Libya and Syria.

4. IS US IMPERIALISM GUILTY OF WAR CRIMES?

US, NATO and allied forces have committed the most despicable crimes against humanity such as the massacre of civilians, torture and murder of prisoners of war and the use of weapons of mass destruction. US forces have used white phosphorus bombs and depleted uranium ammunition under international conventions for causing painful deaths and cancer among the affected population.

Faced with its own debilitating economic difficulties, however, the US has begun pressuring its NATO allies to increase their military spending and contribution to NATO. US military allies have been asked by Trump "to pay for your own defense". NATO members have recently committed to increase their military budgets to 2% of GDP and spend 20% of their defense budgets on military equipment.

While burning obscene amounts for war, the U.S. and NATO members deny needed social services in health, education and social welfare for the people, or to aid the refugees fleeing from U.S.-NATO wars and policies.

9. HOW ARE WORKERS AND PEOPLES RESISTING WAR, MILITARISM AND NEOFASCISM?

In the face of the worsening atrocities of the U.S., its imperialist allies and its proxies, more and more people are resisting the U.S. imperialist war machine and aggression.

The Palestinian people continue to resist the Zionist occupation of historic Palestine and Israel's policy of ethnic cleansing and apartheid against the Palestinian people. The Kurdish people's resistance, with the Kurdish women's army at the forefront, have fought off and taken

back territories from the Daesh while fighting off attacks from the fascist Turkish army.

In Kashmir, 2016 has seen the people once again rise up, which has been met with military force and sweeping civilian arrests. In Manipur and the north east of India, resistance continues to the heavy militarisation, policing, proxy wars and suppression of democratic voices and the use of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, National Security Act, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, Seditious Act and other repressive laws.

People's movements in the Philippines, India, West Papua, Colombia, Mexico and other oppressed countries continue to wage militant and valiant struggles for national freedom and democracy. The Kurds, Palestinians and Arab peoples continue to assert their sovereignty against US-Israeli occupation and expansion.

All over the world, people are also protesting against the presence of US troops and bases – in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, Honduras, El Salvador, even in Italy, Germany and Turkey. Opposition to the imposition of US military bases is particularly sharp in several locations, including Okinawa Island in Japan, Jeju Island



8. WHO PROFITS DIRECTLY FROM WAR?

Despite a defense budget that exceeds that of the next seven largest military spending countries in the world combined, the US government, with Donald Trump at the helm, pushed for a 10 percent hike or an additional \$54 billion in military spending.

The \$639 billion dollars to be funneled into the US government's military-industrial complex confirms that war is directly beneficial to US monopoly capitalists as they exploit the working class and oppressed peoples.

A new arms race has commenced between the U.S., Russia and China to develop hypersonic missiles, new drones, anti-satellite systems

and tactical nuclear weapons to enhance the pre-emptive first-strike capabilities of their respective armed forces. The U.S. alone is set to spend 1 trillion dollars over the next 30 years to "modernize" all aspects of its nuclear arsenal. The U.S. also leads the world in arms sales.

War has become a lucrative business for governments and private contractors. In waging wars, the US has collected substantial spoils of war, including sources of oil, military bases and stations, military supply contracts and contracts for the "reconstruction" of the countries ravaged by US wars. Superprofits for U.S. corporations such as Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Boeing and General Dynamics skyrocket together with the spread of death and destruction.



The U.S. military has trained and armed surrogate armies and paramilitary groups including jihadists such as Al Qaeda and the Daesh (ISIS/ISIL) to attack or destabilize countries not aligned with U.S. imperialist designs in the oil-rich region of West and Central Asia and North Africa.

These wars of aggression and proxy wars using jihadist groups have levelled towns, villages and industrial centres, wrecked civilian infrastructure such as dams, bridges, hospitals, schools, energy facilities, historical sites, churches and mosques, etc. 80% of casualties of these wars have been civilians, including women, children and the elderly.

According to a report released in 2015 by Physicians for Social Responsibility, Physicians for Global Survival, and the International

Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, at least one million Iraqis were killed between 2003 and 2012 as a direct result of the U.S. invasion and occupation. That same study found that at least 1.3 million people have been killed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as the result of the so-called "War on Terror" waged in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. In 2015, the US officially dropped over 22,000 bombs, including drone strikes, on Iraq and Syria alone, an average of over 60 bombs per day.

According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the relentless bombings in Yemen by the US-backed coalition have destroyed significant parts of health infrastructure and are exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation. At least 10,000 civilians have already been killed and more than 7.6 million



Yemenis, including 3 million women and children, are on the verge of starvation because the US and its allies Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are blocking all land routes, airports and the coasts preventing food supplies from coming through.

According to the Office of the United Nations Refugee Agency, the number of individuals “forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations” had surpassed 60 million in 2015 and was the highest level recorded since World War II and its immediate aftermath. More than two-thirds of all refugees came from just two countries that have been targets of US-led wars – Syria and Afghanistan. Over half of all these refugees were children

But there has not been an uproar in the UN and from the “international community” especially from the “civilized countries” of the West that are quick to condemn Assad of alleged “war crimes” and North Korea for war provocation.

5. HOW ELSE IS US IMPERIALISM WAGING WAR AGAINST THE PEOPLE?

Young Americans, especially people of color and the unemployed, have

been sacrificed in these wars of aggression overseas. The US government has admitted that 4,448 US soldiers died and 32,221 of them were injured in the Iraq war. Many of the US soldiers who survive these wars suffer from post-traumatic brain injury and post trauma disability.

The US-led war for oil in the Greater Middle East has resulted in the deaths and injury of millions. As a result, the terrorist groups that were supposedly the targets of these U.S.-led attacks have grown in number and spread even farther. After 16 years of the “US’ war on terror”, the Taliban now control more territory in Afghanistan than at any point since 2001 while the US-backed Afghan government controls no more than 60 percent of the country. This clearly shows that the US-NATO “war on terror” kills more civilians and breeds more militants opposed to the US and their proxies in the country.

Washington’s European NATO allies, meanwhile, have suffered the blowback from their support of the US wars of aggression as demonstrated by the terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels and London that have victimized civilians and created an atmosphere of terror among the people.

As the terrorism that imperialist

US overseas facilities include at least four new large-scale bases or “hubs” plus a greater number of smaller camps and “lily pads” which serve as “spokes” to house drones, surveillance aircraft, or pre-positioned weaponry and supplies for US troops and other military personnel present in about 160 foreign countries and territories.

This network of bases that encircle the planet – along with the U.S. Navy’s 11 aircraft carrier strike groups – serve as the backbone of the U.S. imperialist war machine. They are essential for storing weapons and war equipment, hosting troops, and surveillance. They serve as launchpads for drone strikes or larger attacks, for covert operations, for information and cyberwarfare, and other forms of foreign intervention.

Even before the U.S.’ Strategic Pivot to Asia was announced in 2011, the U.S. navy has been stepping up military exercises as well as provocative air and sea-based surveillance and patrol activities near Chinese borders – raising the risk of direct confrontations and war escalation in the Asia-Pacific region. It has also imposed blockades and military provocation against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The U.S. is also outsourcing its base-building as a cost-cutting measure as well as a way of deflecting opposition from local populations. For example, the Jeju naval base currently being constructed is South Korean in name, but it will port U.S. aircraft carriers, attack submarines and Aegis-missile carrying destroyers.

In The Coming War with China, John Pilger writes: “Across the East China Sea lies the Korean island of Jeju, a semi-tropical sanctuary and World Heritage Site declared ‘an island of world peace’. On this island of world peace has been built one of the most provocative military bases in the world, less than 400 miles from Shanghai. The fishing village of Gangjeong is dominated by a South Korean naval base purpose-built for US aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines and destroyers equipped with the Aegis missile system, aimed at China.”

The nearby Japanese island of Okinawa has 32 military installations, from which Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan and Iraq have previously been attacked by the United States. Today, the principal target is China. Four Japanese Ryukyu islands are being eyed for U.S. base building at Japanese expense.



US-LED MILITARIZATION AND WAR

\$639 BILLION

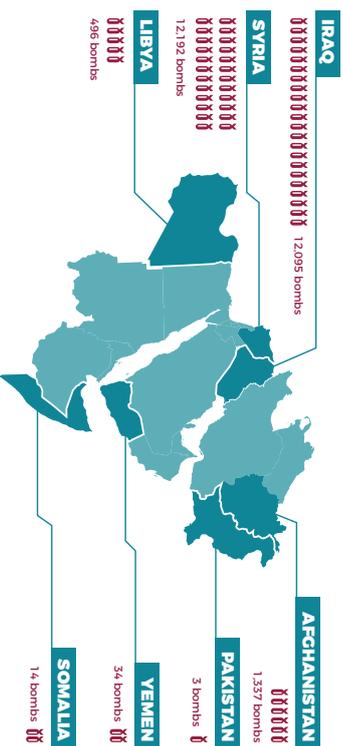
currently being funneled into the US government's military-industrial complex confirms and reinforces war, militarism, and neo-fascism as the foundation of US-led monopoly capitalism.



A defense budget that exceeds that of the 7 largest military spending countries in the world combined.

+ \$54 BILLION

the US government, with Donald Trump at the helm, pushed for an additional \$54 billion in military spending.



2002

Over the last 15 years the U.S. and its allies have bombed, invaded or occupied at least seven countries.

2017

In 2015, the US officially dropped over 22,000 bombs, including drone strikes on Iraq and Syria alone, an average of over 60 bombs per day.

\$38 BILLION

Aid of US government to sustain Israel's apartheid policies and brutal occupation of Palestine.



SOLIDARITY AND FIGHTBACK!

SOLIDARITY AND FIGHTBACK BUILDING RESISTANCE TO US-LED WAR, MILITARISM AND NEO-FASCISM August 7, 2017 | University of British Columbia

countries have exported comes home to roost, these states also become even more repressive at home by enacting more laws and regulations that curtail civil liberties, increasing mass surveillance, and militarizing the police and border controls.

For instance, the American people face escalating neo-fascist attacks, mass incarceration, union-busting, criminalization, militarization of law enforcement, police brutality, ICE raids and deportations, and mass surveillance. Across the US, for example, heavily armed Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams are forcing their way into working people's homes in the middle of the night, often deploying explosive devices such as flashbang grenades to temporarily blind and deafen residents, simply to serve a search warrant on the suspicion that someone may be in possession of a small amount of drugs. The US imprisons a full quarter of the entire world's prison population, disproportionately comprising blacks and other minorities.

War and militarization also diverts enormous amounts of much needed resources from socially useful purposes towards war and destruction. A 2015 report from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that

eliminating extreme poverty and hunger by 2030 would require an additional \$265 billion per year of expenditure on improving agriculture and rural infrastructure in poor communities. This is equivalent to a mere 15 per cent of global military spending in 2015. More scientists and R&D funds are employed on weapons research worldwide than on developing technologies for new energy sources, improving human health, raising agricultural productivity, and controlling pollution.

6. HOW IS IMPERIALISM WAGING WAR AGAINST THE PLANET?

The election of Trump and continuing control of the global economy by the oil, gas and coal barons and their elected fossil fuel supporters has the world facing an ecological catastrophe of the highest degree.

As commentator Tom Engelhardt writes: "With both the CIA's coup-making and the military's regime-change traditions in mind, could the United States also overthrow a planet? If, as the head of what's already the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter, Trump carries out the future energy policies he promised during the election campaign -- climate-science funding torn up, climate

agreements denounced or ignored, alternative energy development downplayed, pipelines green-lighted, fracking and other forms of fossil-fuel extraction further encouraged, and the U.S. fully reimaged as the Saudi Arabia of North America -- he will, in effect, be launching a regime-change action against Planet Earth."

Of course Trump is not alone, just more transparent. Canada's so-called "progressive" government

of Justin Trudeau, who came to power on the promise of climate justice and a new relationship with indigenous people, has just

green-lighted two major pipeline developments, Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Project and Enbridge Line 3 Replacement. These will massively increase the extraction of dirty oil from the Alberta Tar Sands, endangering the mainly indigenous as well as other communities along its route with pipeline leaks, explosions and ship wrecks, and rendering it impossible for Canada to respect its climate change promises made in Paris.

In the wake of events unfolding in North Dakota near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation, Canada's Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr



told business leaders that Canada is prepared to deploy the military against anti-pipeline actions deemed "not to be peaceful," raising the possibility the country could face a scenario last seen during the Oka Crisis in 1990. Business as usual also for Canadian imperialism.

"As demand for products like minerals, timber and palm oil continues, governments, companies and criminal gangs are seizing land in defiance of the people who live on it," said Billy Kyle, a senior campaigner for Global Witness which documented lethal attacks against environmental activists in 16 countries in 2015.

"Communities that take a stand are increasingly finding themselves in the firing line of companies' private security, state forces and a thriving market for contract killers. For every killing we document, many others go unreported."

At least 185 environmental activists were killed in 2015, the highest annual death toll on record according to Global Witness. Brazil was worst hit with 50 deaths, many of them killings of campaigners who were trying to combat illegal logging in the Amazon. The Philippines was second with 33. Colombia had 26 fatal attacks; Peru, 12; Nicaragua, 12; and Democratic Republic of Congo had 11.

The most deadly industry to protest against was mining, with 42 deaths in 2015 related to anti-mining activities. Agribusiness, hydroelectric dams and logging were also key drivers of violence, and many of the murders occurred in remote villages deep within rainforests.

Military bases also spread toxic chemicals in the land and oceans, not to mention store weapons of mass destruction.

7. HOW IS THE US FURTHER EXPANDING ITS GLOBAL MILITARY BOOTPRINT?

U.S. militarism is now further intensifying as it sets its aim at other imperialist powers, placing humanity in ever-greater peril.

The U.S. is expanding its global military boot print by establishing a new network of bases in countries stretching from Africa to East Asia. There are now more than 800 U.S. bases overseas in more than 80 countries - compared to no more than 30 foreign military bases for all other countries combined, mostly owned by US allies such as France and the UK. According to David Vine, "the United States likely has more bases in foreign lands than any other people, nation, or empire in history."