

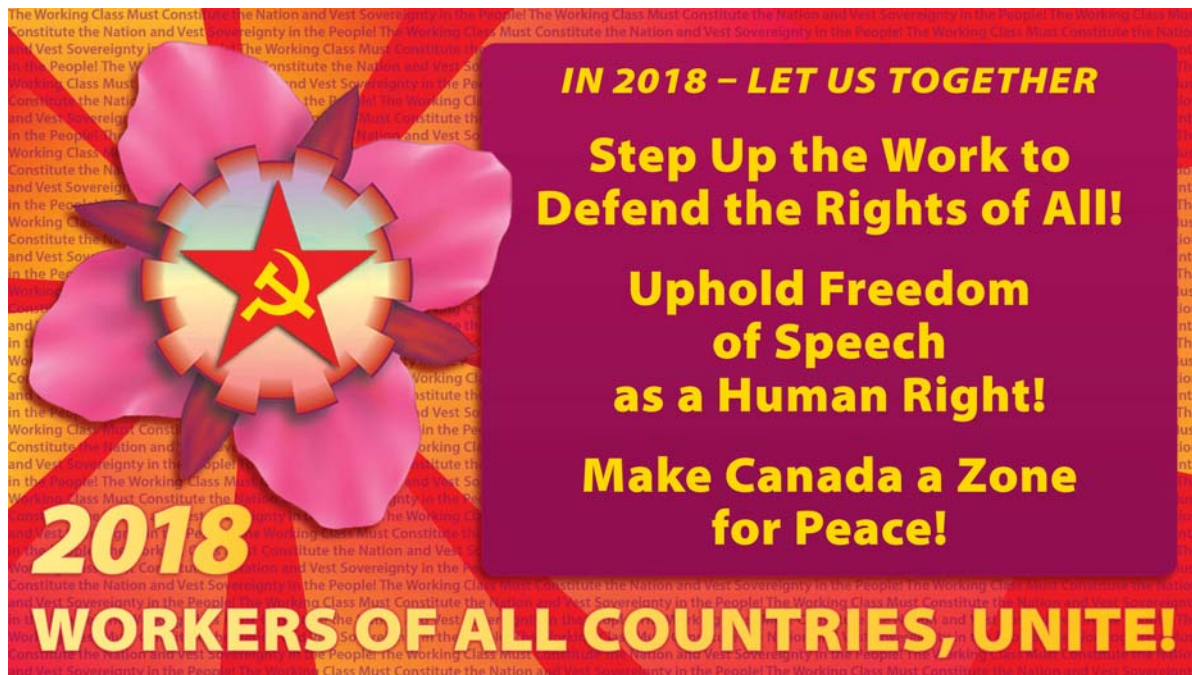


January 13, 2018 - No. 1

New Year 2018

**Step Up the Work to Defend
the Rights of All!
Uphold Freedom of Speech
as a Human Right!
Make Canada a Zone for Peace!**

- Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) -



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New Year 2018

Step Up the Work to Defend the Rights of All! Uphold Freedom of Speech as a Human Right! Make Canada a Zone for Peace!

**- Statement of the Communist Party of Canada
(Marxist-Leninist), January 1, 2018 -**

PDF

On the occasion of the New Year 2018, the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) sends its revolutionary greetings to the working people of Canada and the world.

Along with all Canadians and the peoples everywhere, we enter the New Year conscious of the grave dangers that lie ahead. The period of retreat of revolution, ushered in when the Cold War and the bi-polar division of the world ended nearly 30 years ago, is accompanied by the institutionalization of an all-pervasive counter-revolution. This has given rise to a particular historical juncture where the old forms hitherto known to humankind have passed away and new forms consistent with the requirements of the times have yet to be brought into being.



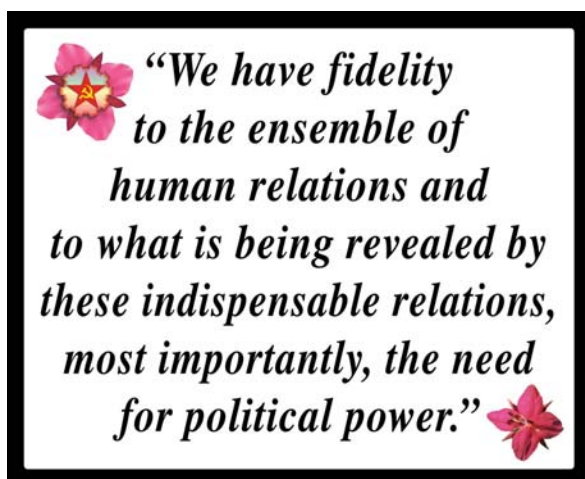
The profoundly anti-social offensive unleashed by those who control the economy and political power is destroying the human productive forces on an unprecedented scale. It blocks the release of the human energy required for the benefit of human society. The outlook it presents to the peoples everywhere is one of disaster in the form of nuclear holocaust, a global war on terror, massive famines, deprivation and migrations with all the attendant suffering and ills. The outlook is sustained by the End of History thesis that liberal democracy

is the pinnacle of democracy beyond which no further development is required or even possible.

The insecurity inherent in this form of democracy is drowning the lives of the working people all over the world. It has created the condition for the dangers posed by nuclear weapons, climate change and the war on terror to wreak havoc on humankind. Those who have usurped power by force within the imperialist heartlands and internationally persist in their rule by depriving the people of an outlook that favours them and the solving of the problems they and society face. Promoting a view that the people confront an unthinkable apocalypse whose horrors are too big to consider reveals that those in control are in a deep crisis and unfit to rule yet they persist in their irrational view that the people have no choice but to entrust their fate to those incapable of finding a way forward.

The inference drawn from this apocalyptic outlook is that the humans who collectively have created all the productive forces, science and technology underlying the disasters before us cannot control their own creations. The people are forced to believe that an irreconcilable breakdown has occurred between the productive powers and the products they create. People are meant to turn their backs on science and technology because the productive powers and products are out of their control and they can do nothing about it. The only option made available is to turn to global police powers to defend liberal democracy, which we are reminded is the highest and final stage of humankind, and use those police powers against those who seek to destroy liberal democracy for reasons of hate, revenge, evil and self-serving private interests and gain. Trump's actions in the U.S. and throughout the world can be understood on the basis of the outlook that whatever he cannot control, he will destroy.

CPC(M-L) rejects any outlook that seeks to imbue us with a view that no alternative is possible. We reject an outlook that tells us human beings have no other option but to submit to the police powers over which not only we, the people, exercise no control but over which those who have seized power by force exercise no control either.



In the name of defending the national interest and civilized values, which the ruling elite have declared are one and the same, every form of diversion is used to block the people from forming their own political movement and to deprive them of an outlook advantageous to them and to finding solutions to the problems they and society face.

CPC(M-L) upholds the conclusion of modern science and human experience, which tells us that human beings by using their speech to affirm their conscience, can bring forth their own thought material and establish a framework

that favours them. They can think things through and work out how to resolve the contradictions in favour of humanity. Far from U.S. imperialism and the rulers being indispensable in the world, it is the relations of humans and humans, and humans and nature that are truly indispensable. All individuals, all members of the human species, all persons and their collectives are indispensable. They are not dispensable as the rulers claim.

Given the rulers' claim that all the future holds is an unthinkable apocalypse, we draw the conclusion that what is necessary is our own thinking and our own way of looking at the world from a vantage point far different from theirs. In our experience, the vantage point that favours

human beings emerges from revolutionary practice. Revolutionary practice is the action that intervenes in any situation with analysis, in a manner that puts the human person at the centre of the action. This action with analysis not only reveals the Necessity for Change but also *de facto* changes to our advantage the material conditions as they present themselves. Revolutionary practice is required to resolve the crisis in a manner that favours the working class and others of this country and on the world scale.

The emphasis on apocalypse to deprive us of an outlook is a form of coercion aimed at persuading us to give up and give in. It has the same effect as the bombs and guns, corruption and bribery used by the rulers to remain in power. What this reveals is not that we are targeted by fake news as such, or that we are deprived of contextual information to draw warranted conclusions, but that the working class and others amongst the people need their own outlook and their own nation-building project arrived at based on their own politics and organization. The situation reveals the need for the people to develop a modern democratic personality that expresses itself in the form of an anti-war government. This is required not only to open society's path to progress but the path to progress of humanity itself at this time.



In the opinion of CPC(M-L), this year will bring to the fore what it means to be revolutionary. To have fidelity to a cause is not enough to be considered revolutionary, no matter how well intentioned. For instance, not a few are alarmed by the rise of what they see to be fascism and a dangerous right wing in the form of racists, misogynists, Islamophobes and extremists of all kinds. While it is true that police powers are the only vestige that remains of the public authority in control of what is called the civil power, a lack of actions with analysis leads many to respond to the dangers humankind faces today by rising in defence of liberal democracy, as the Anglo-American imperialists did in World War II when confronted by the fascist menace. This reaction to the situation shows the need to make a break with Cold War historiography. The system called liberal democracy is precisely the system of representation in crisis, that system that has given rise to governments out of control and a state power devouring itself.



Unfettered police powers in the form of global cartels and oligopolies have seized the political powers of the state and act with impunity. A main advocate of these police powers is no doubt U.S. President Donald Trump who openly calls for the destruction of whatever he cannot control. But he and his henchmen are not alone. Their existence cannot be explained by saying they are rogue elements who, for self-serving reasons, pursue anti-people or wrong policies.

The crisis is such that others within the situation pose as left wing or progressive in opposition to right wing extremism, which threatens liberal

democracy. The people are asked to trust the progressives to defend freedom, peace and human rights and in doing so liberal democracy will be preserved. Such is the case of the Government of Canada and its Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other representatives of liberal hypocrisy. Their actions facilitate the destructive path on which the U.S. imperialists have embarked based on the claim that the U.S. is indispensable.

The liberal hypocrites, calling themselves progressive, base their actions on the same outlook of apocalypse. To safeguard peace, they swear, all must come under the control of the U.S. war machine. Those who refuse to come under U.S. control are targeted for attack and those that cannot be controlled are slated for destruction. The Liberal government has put Canada in the forefront of creating new illegitimate international bodies comprised of so-called allies to enforce this dictate through military and other means of coercion.

The year 2018 is to begin with the holding of one such gathering in Vancouver on January 16, meant to further isolate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, prevent it from following its own independent path and prepare public opinion for its total destruction, as Trump dictated at the United Nations. Contrary to the liberal hypocrites and others in the camp of U.S. imperialism, we must demand that the U.S. sign a peace treaty with the DPRK, something it has refused to do since the Korean War reached an impasse in 1953, resulting in an armistice agreement but not a peace treaty and the removal of hostile U.S. armed forces.



The atrocities the U.S. committed against the Korean people during the war and since are so horrendous as to force the DPRK to defend its people at all costs. Meanwhile, the belligerent powers that invaded the Korean Peninsula, including Canada, are countenancing a repeat of the total destruction and genocide they committed. It must not pass!



So too, Canada is resorting to new hooligan international arrangements to justify overthrowing the government of Venezuela and reinstalling the racist oligarchy, which dominated that country in the past, reducing the people to a life of poverty, deprivation and oppression. Meanwhile, Canada remains silent about the killings carried out by those it helped bring to power in a coup in Honduras and the corruption of those it put in power in Haiti. Canada is supplying weapons and other means to sustain the murderous counter-revolution in Ukraine where violence against the people is increasing dangerously. Canada through NATO is partner to attempts to surround Russia. It sells arms to Europe, Saudi Arabia and others and participates

in the ceaseless slaughter of the people in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria as well as Yemen and others. Its interests and interference in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean are detrimental to the peoples there and do not contribute to peace, freedom or human rights.

To act with impunity in all these areas, the Government of Canada has given free rein to police powers being erected in this country as part of an international cartel of spy agencies, mercenaries, NGOs and armed forces that it equates with the defence of the U.S. as the indispensable nation. Canada is fully involved in the aggressive military alliances NATO and NORAD, as well as supranational free trade agreements where decisions taken by the oligarchs and their global oligopolies are said to be in the national interest.

The government's moves to rescind civil rights such as freedom of speech and association through Bill C-59, the new national security bill before the Parliament of Canada, and to reform electoral laws further exacerbate the crisis of legitimacy in which governments and the state power are mired. All of it reveals that the forms given rise to by the European nation-state and the system of representation called liberal democracy are finished and that the people need to bring into being new forms that favour their interests and those of all humankind.

So too, the refusal of the ruling circles to bargain in good faith with the collectives of workers for wages and conditions of work and retirement that recognize workers' contribution to the wealth they create for society shows that the equilibrium and arrangements developed after WWII to provide the people with security no longer exist. The working people must resolve the problem of their powerlessness and can do so using their speech to think things through, exchange their experiences and ideas with one another, establish what is relevant and what is not, and determine how to intervene in any situation in a manner that favours them.

Matters of war and peace and the economy concern us all as human beings. We have a human right to deliberate on these matters of concern and this right is inviolable. Without it, we cannot affirm our human quality, or activate the human factor/social consciousness to humanize the natural and social environment.

Affirming our human conscience by exercising our human right to speak does not come under the rubric of civil rights as contained in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The limits on the exercise of these civil rights are said to be reasonable but who decides what those rights are, how they should be exercised, and what is "reasonable" is kept hidden. The people are told that a motivation of Bill C-59 is to balance rights and security. Claims are made that it must be in conformity with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* even though it puts the police powers in control of decision-making. Those police powers include the arbitrary powers of ministers and judges which are, *de facto*, above the rule of law. For their part, legislatures are in contempt of the commonly held democratic opinion that they are supposed to represent the people. To pass laws legalizing the use of police powers in the name of security and equating this to the national interest clearly reveals that the people are rendered powerless by the current state of affairs.



The situation brings to mind the verse of the workers' anthem, *The Internationale*:

*We want no condescending saviors
To rule us from their judgement hall
We workers ask not for their favours*

*Let each one rule for all.
To make the thief disgorge his booty
To free the spirit from its cell
We must ourselves decide our duty
We must decide and do it well.*

With best wishes for success in all your endeavours in the coming year!

Warmongering Meeting on Korea in Vancouver

Canada Is Being Disingenuous

- Pauline Easton -

Working for Peace on the Korean Peninsula Information Pickets and Petition Signing



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Canada will co-host along with the United States the "United Nations Command Sending States Meeting" in Vancouver on January 16, as part of what U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson calls "the pressure campaign against North Korea." Preparations for this event began prior to November of last year. Under the guise of supporting a rules-based international order, the meeting brings together the original 21 aggressor countries that sent troops to wage the brutal war against Korea between 1950 and 1953.[1] The war against Korea took the lives of over 4 million Korean citizens and amongst other crimes, razed the city of Pyongyang to the ground.

The U.S. is mobilizing into its aggressive war alliance, along with certain other countries, the aggressor states that attacked Korea. Canada and the U.S. call this alliance, which is unsanctioned and outside the United Nations, the "Vancouver Group." The coalition is another created in the style of a mafia cartel that marauds in the name of high ideals in pursuit of the U.S. imperialist striving to control the world. It is similar to the "coalition of the willing" that attacked Iraq with its "shock and awe" destruction of Baghdad in 2003, except in this case Canada is a willing participant.

Global Affairs Canada says the Vancouver meeting is an opportunity for foreign ministers to "demonstrate solidarity in opposition to North Korea's dangerous and illegal actions and to work together to strengthen diplomatic efforts toward a secure, prosperous and denuclearized Korean peninsula. To this end, foreign ministers will discuss ways to increase the effectiveness of the global sanctions regime in support of a rules-based international order."



For Canada to speak about "support of a rules-based international order" is disingenuous when it participates in circumventing the UN to form a coalition taking decisions about a UN member country without the participation of the targeted country or others who may not accept further threats. Furthermore, this comes at a time when the U.S. has repeatedly used its influence in the UN Security Council to impose crippling economic sanctions directed at the people of the DPRK. The DPRK did not capitulate to the U.S. in 1950 and it is not likely to capitulate to crippling sanctions today either. With this Vancouver meeting, the U.S. is looking to its allies to help "increase the pressure campaign" with a view to destroying the DPRK. The world already witnessed how this happened in Iraq.

With this meeting, the U.S. and Canada are creating a framework based on portraying the DPRK as an aggressor nation, which must be contained at all costs to secure peace on the Korean Peninsula. This perpetuates the Cold War disinforming outlook used to justify the Korean War in the first place. That war was waged to secure the Korean Peninsula for the U.S. imperialists who had divided Korea and fomented a civil war there in the 1945-1950 period. Just as the Japanese imperialists had used an occupied Korea to launch their war to colonize China in 1931, the U.S. wanted to use a subjugated and occupied Korea to stop the spread of communism in Asia and as a staging ground on mainland Asia to defeat the Chinese people who were on the cusp of victory in their century long struggle against colonial occupation.

The U.S. aggressors accuse the Korean people, in the form of the DPRK, of being an aggressor against themselves and their own nation. The truth is otherwise. Through their own efforts, the Korean people achieved victory in 1945 following their liberation war against Japan and its brutal occupation of Korea since 1905 upon the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War.

Gaining victory over the Japanese militarists, the Korean people aspired to realize the fruits of their hard-won independence. But the U.S. imperialists could not countenance the Koreans establishing their own rule and intervened to subjugate Korea for their own aim of global hegemony.

Despite the defeat of the Japanese in Korea and the defeat of Japanese militarism during the Second World War, the U.S. imperialists brought the Japanese ruling elite back to Korea to administer the south which was under U.S. occupation. This led to the division of Korea into two and caused a civil war.

The ensuing narrative that the DPRK launched the Korean War by aggression against the south of their own country is a Cold War anti-communist fairy tale to portray the communists as

aggressive, dangerous, irrational, hegemonic and the cause of all the problems. The U.S. is falsely portrayed as the indispensable nation upholding human rights, peace and freedom. The U.S. Cold War construct bears no resemblance to how matters posed themselves in the world in 1950 or now in 2018.



Despite and because of the sanctions and provocations the Korean people face for desiring peace on their Peninsula, and against all odds, the Korean people seek the peaceful reunification of their nation and for all foreign troops and weapons to be removed from Korean soil. From the time of President Kim Il Sung who led Korea to victory over the Japanese invaders in 1945, the leadership in the north of the country persists in efforts to reunify the country. It has put forward a two system solution that has worked effectively in China as concerns

Hong Kong and Macao, both of which are integral parts of China. Several times, the Presidents of south Korea who managed to break out from the U.S. stranglehold, however briefly, engaged in talks to take concrete measures to reunify the nation, which the DPRK greeted with sincerity and enthusiasm.

The division of the Korean nation is a tragedy that requires a solution but the U.S. imperialists and other belligerent countries remain indifferent to the profound suffering the Korean people have experienced as a result of this division. Families have literally been kept apart for 70 years. To undermine efforts at reunification, the U.S. imperialists and their allies are coming together in this coalition once again to meddle in the internal affairs of the Korean people to maintain control over the Korean Peninsula.

Efforts that promote reunification, such as having a joint delegation at this year's Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, south Korea, and holding top level meetings are not manoeuvres showing that Donald Trump's threats work. They are concrete expressions of the policy of promoting reunification, such as the two inter-Korean summits of 2000 and 2007, which informs the foreign and domestic policy of the DPRK.

Canada was a belligerent nation operating under U.S. command under the cover of the UN flag in 1950-53 in the war against Korea. As such, Canada has a responsibility to make amends. At that time China had been blocked from taking its seat in the Security Council and Russia was not present in protest of China's exclusion. Today, both China and Russia are present in the Security Council and the use of their veto could block the U.S. imperialists from once again operating under the UN flag for nefarious purposes. However today too the big powers refuse to uphold the UN Charter and renew international relations on a modern basis. The UN must not be used as an



instrument of aggression against Korea. The Security Council has levelled increasingly crippling sanctions against the DPRK in the name of trying to force it to give up testing what it considers its nuclear deterrent. The experience of Iraq was conclusive as concerns the use of sanctions. A UN report found that, from 1991 to late 1995, as many as 576,000 Iraqi children died because of the harsh economic sanctions, of which then-U.S. ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright was a vocal supporter. In 1996 she famously said that these deaths were "worth it." Far from ending the sanctions, President Clinton made her Secretary of State and, when sanctions failed to achieve the desired results, the U.S. invaded Iraq with its "coalition of the willing."

The creation of this "United Nations Command Sending States Meeting" in Vancouver to give legitimacy to a body taking decisions to further U.S. imperialist aims by calling the DPRK an aggressor is a Cold War fraud and will not pass. Whatever the meeting decides will not be in accordance with a rules-based international order and will not contribute to peace, freedom or rights.

Canadians must take responsibility for establishing a framework that will lead to peace on the Korean Peninsula. Canadians want their government to be a factor for peace and justice in the world not war. They want a "rules-based international order," not coalitions of willing participants in U.S. aggression and striving for hegemony. To achieve what they want Canadians must participate in elaborating what it means to be for peace and a "rules-based international order." These matters are a profound concern about which the people have the right to deliberate and speak.

Canadians must not permit Canada to be used once again as a tool of U.S. imperialism to wage war on the Korean people or any other people!

See also:

- "U.S. Must Immediately End Its Provocations and Sign a Peace Treaty with the DPRK," *TML Weekly*, December 2, 2017.
- "Koreans Demand Closure of U.S. Base and an End to Canadian and Australian Warships in Their Ports," *TML Weekly*, December 2, 2017."

Note

1. Twenty-one UN member countries participated in the aggression against Korea calling it a UN police action. Sixteen aggressor countries supplied fighting units: United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Greece, the Netherlands, South Africa, Turkey, Thailand, the Philippines and Belgium (whose battalion included personnel from Luxembourg).

Five countries contributed medical detachments: Denmark, India, Italy, Norway and Sweden.

Working for Peace on the Korean Peninsula Information Pickets and Petition Signing



Canadians want their government to be a factor for peace and justice in the world and make a positive contribution to diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We have a duty to ourselves and the Korean people to ensure another Korean War does not break out and that the Canadian government does not contribute to preparing such a war in our name as is being done today.

More than 2,500 Canadians thus far have signed the Canadian Petition Against War and Aggression on the Korean Peninsula. The petition calls on the Canadian government to:

1. Exhort the U.S. government to take up the offer of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to sign a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War and normalize relations to immediately reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula.
2. Call on the U.S. government to immediately withdraw all U.S. troops and weapons from the Korean Peninsula.
3. Respect the right of the Korean people to sort out their own problems, including national reunification, peacefully and without outside interference.
4. Withdraw Canada's participation in U.S.-ROK-Japan military exercises that threaten peace in the region.
5. Support peace on the Korean Peninsula by normalizing relations with the DPRK and developing diplomatic relations established with the DPRK in 2001 so that government, cultural, economic and civil society relations can be established to the benefit of the peoples of both countries.

In 2017, regular petitioning took place in Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton and Vancouver by activists of CPC(M-L), Korean patriots and anti-war activists. We encourage everyone in 2018 to take the petition to their friends and colleagues, unions and labour councils and to share it on social media and argue out the



Launch of Canadian Petition Against War and Aggression on the Korean Peninsula in Toronto, October 25, 2017.

stands it contains to assist in creating the public opinion across the country required to block attempts by the ruling circles in Canada to make Canada a zone for war against Korea and meddling in Asia. By taking a stand to support peace on the Korean Peninsula Canadians can speak in their own name and empower themselves to make a contribution to world peace.

Join in!

For a copy of the petition click [here](#).

For further information e-mail cankorpeace@gmail.com



Collecting signatures on the Canadian Petition Against War and Aggression on the Korean Peninsula, Montreal, December 13, 2017.

Canada Seeks Expanded Military Role in Asia-Pacific

- Enver Villamizar -

While Canada claims it is for diplomacy and solidarity, it is not well known that the Canadian military has joined the massive annual U.S.-Republic of Korea joint military exercises Key Resolve and Foal Eagle in the spring and Ulchi-Freedom Guardian in August as well as others, all

aimed at provoking the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) into a war on the Korean Peninsula. In September 2017, after participating in joint naval manoeuvres with the U.S., south Korean and Japanese military, HMCS *Ottawa* and HMCS *Winnipeg* docked at the U.S. naval base on Jeju Island which the people are fighting to demilitarize.

As well as threatening the Korean and world's people into submitting to U.S. imperialist control of the Korean Peninsula, this is part and parcel of the Trudeau government's aim to boost Canada's "expeditionary" military forces in the Asia-Pacific region, a geopolitical tinderbox where the rivalries between the U.S. drive for domination of the South China Sea and China's increasing ambitions and role in the region are being played out.



Picket and signature collection, November 23, 2017, at Production Way -- University Skytrain Station in Burnaby.

On September 7 in Victoria, Canada played host to the U.S. Pacific Command Chiefs of Defense Staff Conference bringing together U.S.-allied Chiefs of Defense Staff in Canada under the rubric of the U.S. Pacific Command.

In November, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took things further during his trip to Asia for meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), where he sought to place Canada at the table of the East Asia Summit for discussions with its members about "the threat from the DPRK."

The strategy to increase Canada's military role in the Asia-Pacific is being implemented at the same time as the Shinzo Abe government is reviving Japanese militarism. This is the same Japan which refuses to take responsibility for its historic crimes against the peoples of Asia, including Korea. By promoting the lie that the DPRK is a threat to Asia which needs to be contained and participating in military exercises alongside Japan and the U.S., Canada is objectively supporting this revival of Japanese militarism in today's context.

As part of trying to dominate Asia and the world, the U.S. is also putting great pressure on Canada and other countries around the Pacific to purchase ballistic missile systems and sensors to be housed on their soil. The Canadian ruling class is obliging by whipping up hysteria about bogus threats from rogue missiles from the DPRK and the need for U.S. "protection" through the expansion of NORAD. In that vein, Vancouver is often cited as being in the path of hypothetical

missiles from the DPRK and the choice of Vancouver to host the "United Nations Command Sending States Meeting" on January 16 is not by chance. Canadians, however, have always opposed attempts to have Canada join U.S. "missile defence."

In 1983, Vancouverites declared their city a nuclear weapons-free zone, expressing the sentiment of the Canadian people that Canada's territory be a zone for peace and disarmament. By choosing Vancouver to host the meeting, the government seeks to destroy this anti-war sentiment by whipping up hysteria that the west coast is the most vulnerable to a nuclear attack from Korea. Thus Vancouverites are pressured to identify their values with Canada's national interest, which the government claims is to submit to the U.S. war machine for protection.

In co-hosting the January meeting with the U.S., it is evident that Canada is marching in lock-step with the United States whose president has already threatened to "destroy" the DPRK and unleash "fire, fury and frankly power, the likes of which this world has never seen before." By its actions, the government is placing Canada more directly in the service of bullying and threats, something Canadians do not accept. For Canada to present its military expansion and phony diplomatic efforts as attempts to seek a peaceful solution on the Korean Peninsula is unacceptable.



Edmonton picket and petition signing, November 25, 2017.

Supplement

Meeting in Vancouver on Korea

Year 60 of the Cuban Revolution

Long Live the Cuban Revolution!

- Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) -



The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) joins the Cuban people and peoples around the world in hailing the Cuban Revolution on the occasion of the 59th anniversary of its triumph. CPC(M-L) sends militant revolutionary greetings to the Communist Party of Cuba, President Raúl Castro Ruz and all the Cuban leadership and the entire Cuban people whose heroic defence of the Revolution inspires the entire world.

The Cuban people are heading into the 60th year of the Revolution having met one challenge after another head on, showing the mettle they and their revolutionary leadership are made of. The response to Hurricane Irma, the worst storm to hit the island in over 80 years, was immediate to ensure that no one was left unprotected or to face the devastating effects of the storm by themselves. At the same time Cuba offered assistance to small Caribbean island states that were also hit hard, in keeping with the internationalism that is one of the hallmarks of the Revolution.

The year also presented challenges of other types in the form of the hostile policy of the Trump administration towards Cuba, resulting in the reversal of advances made towards normalizing bilateral relations over the past three years and a tightening of the blockade along with malicious claims about U.S. diplomats being subjected to "health attacks" in Cuba.

The Cuban people have weathered all these storms, taking the necessary measures to mitigate the effects of the hurricane and uphold their own independence and sovereignty in the face of stepped-up U.S. aggression to make them submit, showing to all the world the meaning of dignity. Through their actions and defence of their right to be they have reaffirmed the socialist character of the Revolution in the present. This shows how the life and work of Comrade Fidel Castro live

on in the Cuban people's actions today.

CPC(M-L) thinks that now more than ever, Canadians must go all out to demand an end to the U.S. blockade and the return of occupied territory in Guantánamo Bay to Cuba. Now is also the time to insist that a policy of non-interference in Cuba's internal affairs is maintained. We pledge to further deepen the profound friendship between the Canadian and the Cuban people.

Viva Cuba!



A 21-gun salute in Havana rings in the New Year and the 60th year of the Cuban Revolution, December 31, 2017. (*Cubanito en Cuba*)

59 Years of Revolution! 59 Years of Independence, Justice and Human Dignity!

- Canadian Network on Cuba -



Today -- January 1st, 2018 -- marks the 59th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. The Canadian Network on Cuba, on behalf of the Canada-Cuba friendship and solidarity movement, sends to the people of Cuba, the Cuban government and Cuba's revolutionary

leadership our warmest greetings on this occasion.

On January 1st, 1959, the people of Cuba led by Fidel Castro, seized their destiny in their own hands, embarking on the path of self-determination, authentic freedom and human dignity. In defending what they have created through their revolution, the Cuban people have faced and defeated every imperialist obstacle and attack. As Cuban President Raúl Castro Ruz declared in his December 21, 2017 speech to Cuba's legislature, Cuba is and will remain, free, sovereign and independent.

As the Cuban people confidently continue on this path, the Canada-Cuba solidarity and friendship movement will continue to strengthen the ties between the peoples of Canada and Cuba, demanding an end to the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba and the campaign of subversion, and calling for the return to Cuba of the illegally occupied territory of the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay.

¡Viva la Revolución Cubana!

On behalf of the Canadian Network on Cuba

*Isaac Saney,
CNC Co-Chair & National Spokesperson*

We Are Here, and Will Remain, Free, Sovereign and Independent

- Cuban President Raúl Castro -



Speech delivered by Cuban President Raúl Castro Ruz during the closing session of the National Assembly of People's Power 8th Legislature, December 21, 2017.

Compañeras and compañeros:

It is my responsibility to make the closing remarks for this last Period of Ordinary Sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power's 8th Legislature. On this occasion, I will address several topics of national and international relevance.

Between September 8 and 10, the country was struck by Hurricane Irma, described as the most powerful and violent extreme weather event in the history of the Atlantic Ocean, which impacted, to one degree or another, 12 provinces, with strong winds, heavy rain, and severe coastal flooding.

Despite the enormous effort conducted to safeguard the population, that included the protection of more than 1.8 million persons, we were obliged to mourn the loss of 10 compatriots. More than 179,000 dwellings were affected and significant damage caused to infrastructure, national health system buildings, educational centres, the sugar industry, tourist facilities, and communications. For the first time ever, the national electrical grid was interrupted across the entire country.

In summary, damage caused by Hurricane Irma was calculated at 13,000,185,000 pesos, a figure produced on the basis of parity between the peso and the U.S. dollar.

Once again, made evident was the spirit of resistance and victory of our people, who confronted the event and the recovery period with organization, unity, discipline, and solidarity.

Within only 20 days, electrical service and water distribution were restored throughout the national territory, an effort in which, along with specialized forces, standing out were the mixed support brigades, organized in every municipality, to undertake clean-up, pruning of trees, opening of trenches, and transportation of utility poles, supporting the workers who took on the task of reestablishing electrical service.

Likewise, in only 62 days, all damage to tourist facilities was repaired, to ensure that they were ready to offer their services before the beginning of the high season.

No one was left to their fate. The revolutionary government took a series of measures to facilitate the acquisition of construction materials and consumer goods of basic necessity to those affected.

We were able to maintain educational and health care services, assuring epidemiological stability.

Advancing are different housing construction programs to build stronger, more resistant dwellings in the most severely affected communities, which will be maintained as one of the principal priorities in the National Economic Plan for next year and in the future. In this sense, local resources available to accelerate a solution to this longstanding problem must be augmented.

To be fair, we must recognize the role played by the strategic regions and their respective chief officers; provincial and municipal defence councils led by high-ranking leaders of the Party and government at these levels, and at the defence zone level; mass organizations; the Revolutionary Armed Forces; the Ministry of the Interior; and other agencies of the Central State Administration.

The results achieved in confronting the hurricane, and the accumulated impact of similar extreme weather events in recent years, confirm the relevance and value of our concept of people's war,



and the organization of the provincial defence system and its systematic improvement, as pillars supporting our ability to resist and overcome any event or threat, regardless of whether it is of natural origin, or any other kind. (*Applause*)

This is an opportunity to reiterate, in the name of the Cuban people, our deepest gratitude for the help and countless expressions of support arriving from all parts of the planet, from heads of state and government, political organizations, solidarity movements, and friends of Cuba.

Moving on to another issue, I will take advantage of the occasion to mention the successful holding of the first stage of the general elections process, in which delegates to Municipal Assemblies of People's Power were elected, constituted this past Sunday, December 17.



Once again our people turned out massively to exercise their right to vote, reaching a participation level of 89.02 per cent in the first round, a figure similar to that of the previous process.

At the same time, the quality of the vote was greater, in comparison to the elections held in 2015, reaching a higher percentage of valid ballots, with fewer voided or blank.

The process was characterized by greater preparation, organization, and cohesion in the

work done by electoral authorities at different levels, state institutions, mass organizations, social associations, and citizens.

In fact, the process constituted a massive demonstration of the people's support and confidence in the Revolution and socialist democracy, as well as a worthy tribute to our historic leader, and this must be the case in the second stage, which will be convoked shortly.

As was explained, given the severe damage caused by Hurricane Irma, right in the middle of the direct nomination of delegate candidates phase, we found ourselves obliged to modify the dates set for the elections of delegates to Municipal Assemblies of People's Power.

As a consequence, today, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic, this Assembly agreed to extend the terms of delegates to Provincial Assemblies and National Assembly of People's Power deputies, meaning that the new Parliament will not be installed February 24, as is customary, but on April 19, coinciding with the date of the triumph at Playa Girón, the first great victory of socialism, already proclaimed by Fidel.

During this session, accountability reports were presented by the Attorney General's Office and the People's Supreme Court, bodies which -- given the important role they play in strengthening institutionality and social discipline -- require support and ongoing attention in carrying out the missions with which they are charged, while respecting their authority, independence, and strictly abiding by the decisions they make. At the same time, ethical behaviour and unwavering commitment to the people and the Revolution must be demanded of their personnel.

Evident in these reports were the advances made by both institutions in fulfilling the responsibilities with which they are charged in the Constitution.

Since this past Tuesday [December 19], deputies have been informed extensively of the country's

economic situation, which frees me from the need to address the subject in detail.

Speaking in December last year before this Assembly, I warned that financial tensions and challenges would continue in 2017, and could even grow worse. Nonetheless, we projected retaking an ascending path in the national economy's performance and achieving moderate growth in the Gross Domestic Product of two per cent.

As was explained over the course of this session, the GDP maintained a positive direction, showing growth of 1.6 per cent, an outcome that may not satisfy us but was achieved in a context aggravated by financial restrictions and insufficient availability of fuel, to which was added the significant impact of a severe three-year drought, and the extensive damage caused by Hurricane Irma, to which I have already referred.

Neither can we overlook the effect of the economic, commercial, financial blockade of the United States government, which not only remains in full force after 56 years, but has been tightened under the new administration.

The economy's modest growth was favoured by positive trends in tourism, a sector in which a new record of 4.7 million international visitors will be established; as well as increases in transportation, communications, agriculture, and construction, fundamentally.

The principal programs of investment, linked to the development of infrastructure and the broadening of external sources of income, performed at an acceptable level.

Amidst financial tensions, the vitality of social services provided to Cubans free of charge was assured. Likewise, the domestic financial equilibrium was maintained, with greater supplies in the network of retail stores, which while still insufficient, allows for a better response to the population's growing demand.

The Economic Plan and State Budget for 2018, approved today by this parliament, estimate growth of the Gross Domestic Product in the area of two per cent, which presupposes the efficient use of financial resources and materials available; raising income from exports; increasing national production, in particular of food; without renouncing development programs that are underway to generate income and new sources of employment.

Next year will also be complicated in terms of the nation's external finances. Nevertheless, we will maintain the firm intention of gradually recuperating international credibility in our economy.



I will take advantage of the opportunity to reiterate, to our creditors, our intention of fulfilling all commitments assumed in the different processes of restructuring our external debt.

We will continue the effort to gradually reduce the list of current overdue payments owed our suppliers, whom we thank for their support and understanding of the transitory difficulties we face.

We must likewise consolidate the incipient participation of foreign investment in our economy,

which showed greater results over the course of 2017, but is clearly still insufficient.

During the day, today, deputies evaluated progress in the implementation of the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Party and the Revolution, as we did yesterday in the Central Committee Plenum.

During the period analyzed, the process of drafting the final versions of the programmatic documents presented to the 7th Party Congress was completed, and progress in the implementation of approved policies was considered in a critical spirit, on the basis of experience gained, with the objective of correcting deviations and violations that came to light.

Intensive work has been done in the drafting of legal norms to perfect the functioning of non-state forms of management, that is self-employment and the experimental non-agricultural cooperatives.

It is important, in this sense, to reiterate that we do not renounce the deployment and development of non-state forms of management in our economy. Nor will we pull back or come to a halt, but we must ensure respect for the law, secure positive results, and firmly confront illegalities and the violation of current policy; in other words, we must ensure that the changes in this sphere are implemented well, and resolutely rectify any deviation that distances us from the chosen path.

At the same time, the approved measures have been established for the gradual transformation and perfection of the state enterprise system, which as we all know is the main form of ownership in the national socialist economy.

In recent days, the new legal regulations on the Cuban enterprise system were issued, which represents another step toward the goal of separating state and business functions and increasing efficiency and organization, granting greater autonomy in its management.

Currently, training and dissemination actions are being carried out to facilitate the implementation of the published legal norms.

Although the elimination of the dual currency and exchange system by itself will not magically resolve all the accumulated problems in the Cuban economy, it constitutes the most decisive step to advance in the updating of the economic model, due to the impact that it will have in all spheres of the economic and social endeavours of the nation. Without solving this, it is difficult to advance correctly.

In this period, efforts have been reinforced and intensified with greater comprehensiveness and scope, such that we are capable of, at the same time that we unify the currency system, overcoming the existing distortions in terms of subsidies, prices, and wholesale and retail rates and, as is logical, pensions and salaries in the state sector of the economy.

No one can calculate, not even the wisest of the wise among us, the elevated cost that the persistence of the dual currency and exchange system has meant for the state sector, which favours the unfair inverted pyramid, where greater responsibility is met with lower compensation, and not all capable citizens are motivated to work legally, while the promotion to higher positions of the best and most skilled workers and cadres is discouraged, some of whom migrate to the non-state sector.

I must admit that this matter has taken us too long and we cannot delay its solution any longer.
(Applause)

As on other occasions, I think it appropriate now to make a brief assessment of some of the main foreign policy issues.

In 2017 we have witnessed a serious, irrational deterioration in relations between the United States and Cuba. Our country is not at all responsible for this setback, marked by the tightening of the blockade, the return of aggressive and disrespectful rhetoric, and the arbitrary application of unjustified measures that significantly affect ties between peoples and families, as well as the rights and freedoms of Cubans and U.S. citizens.



The decisions adopted by the United States government in recent months, not only interrupted the process initiated on the sovereign decision of both countries to move toward a new type of relationship, for the first time in their history, based on respect and civilized coexistence, but have opened new fronts of tension.

In this setback, the United States again resorts to the artificial fabrication of pretexts to justify the return to failed and universally rejected policies.

I categorically reiterate that Cuba had and has no responsibility whatsoever in the incidents that allegedly affected the health of accredited diplomats or other foreign visitors.

The results of the Cuban and U.S. investigations, which until now have not found the slightest evidence of the causes or origin of the health conditions described, confirm as such.

It was not Cuba that established new prohibitions on the already very limited economic, commercial, and financial ties between the two countries, or who has once again restricted the right of U.S. citizens to visit our country and Cubans to the United States, or harmed the functioning of embassies, with negative consequences for migratory relations, exchanges, and travel between the two nations.



We must not forget that the policy adopted by the new government of the United States is opposed by the American people and the international community, which was clearly expressed on November 1 in the United Nations General Assembly on voting, almost unanimously, with the exception of the United States and Israel, in favour of the resolution presented by our country on the need for the U.S. government to put an end to its

economic, commercial and financial blockade, which the Cuban people have suffered for almost 56 years.

Neither does it have the support of the majority of Cuban émigrés, who are also affected by decisions that only favour minority, reactionary sectors, historically interested in leading the two countries toward a confrontation.

For our part, we have made efforts and will continue working to preserve, to the extent possible, the spaces for exchange and cooperation established in recent years and, as I have said repeatedly, Cuba is willing to continue negotiating pending bilateral issues with the United States, on the basis of equality and respect for the sovereignty and independence of our country, and continue the respectful dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest with the U.S. government.

The Cuban Revolution has withstood the onslaught of 11 U.S. administrations of different kinds and here we are and will remain, free, sovereign and independent. (*Applause*)

Our Latin American and Caribbean region is suffering imperialist and oligarchic attacks with the aim of turning back history and destroying the advances achieved by popular forces in recent years.

The Bolivarian Revolution faces an unconventional war imposed by its external enemies and internal coup-plotting sectors.

The results of the recent electoral processes ratify the legitimacy and democratic character of the government led by constitutional President Nicolás Maduro Moros and the civil-military union.

We reject the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States, Canada, and the European Union, and the external interference against Venezuela's Bolivarian Chavista process, which threaten the peace and dialogue between Venezuelans, with destabilizing purposes, and generate economic hardship for the population.



Certain governments of the hemisphere, in complicity with officials of the discredited OAS, are trying to crush Venezuela. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America reiterated, through the declaration of its Political Council, meeting in Havana in recent days, that we will remain united.

The Cuban Revolution suffered similar stages for decades, and even worse on some occasions. With that experience and faithful to our principles, we reiterate our unwavering solidarity with the Bolivarian Republic of

Venezuela.

We will maintain cooperation with the Venezuelan government and people, even under the most adverse circumstances.

We will do everything in our power to fulfill the revolutionary duty of contributing to the victory of the Bolivarian Chavista Revolution. (*Applause*)

We will never be unfaithful to the loyalty and gratitude that we feel toward President Hugo

Chávez Frías for his support and solidarity in difficult moments.

Likewise, we reiterate our support to Senator Cristina Fernández de Kirchner who, as you know, was president of Argentina, and former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, today harassed by the oligarchy with politically motivated legal proceedings.

In this increasingly complex scenario, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have a duty to move toward the political, economic and social integration of Our America. As I have stated in various forums, working for "unity within diversity" is an imperative need.

Cuba will spare no effort to ensure that CELAC, as a genuinely Latin American and Caribbean mechanism, continues to promote the common interests of the region. In this regard, the postulates of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace should continue to be the benchmark in relations between CELAC countries and between the rest of the world and our states.

As has been reported, a few days ago we held the Sixth CARICOM-Cuba Summit in Antigua and Barbuda, which demonstrated not only the high level of relations between Caribbean nations and our country, but also the importance of the mutual cooperation and solidarity that we have maintained for decades.

I wish to reiterate our continued support to our Caribbean brothers and sisters, victims of devastating natural phenomena such as Hurricanes Irma and Maria. At the same time, we demand fair and differentiated treatment for the states of the Caribbean, which today suffer the dramatic effects of climate change, and we reaffirm our conviction that this phenomenon must be faced decisively by all.

To the same extent that its disastrous consequences are revealed, the position of the President of the United States to withdraw from the Paris Agreement becomes even more incoherent, in contrast to the attitude of the rest of the international community, gathered in France on December 12 at the Summit convened by President Emmanuel Macron and the United Nations.

I consider it necessary to dedicate a few words to the situation in Palestine. I reiterate our profound concern and rejection of the unilateral decision of the United States government to recognize the city of Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel, which constitutes a serious violation of United Nations resolutions on the subject, and of international law.

This measure, broadly condemned by the international community, further exacerbates tensions in the area and dispels the possibility of any effort aimed at resuming peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians.

We reaffirm our unconditional support for the search for a comprehensive, just, and lasting solution to the conflict, based on the creation of two states, which ensures the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and to an independent state within the pre-1967 borders, with its capital in East Jerusalem.

Finally, I reiterate with all my energy and conviction that our country will continue to maintain its principled positions in all aspects of international relations, in favour of the rights of the peoples, of peace, justice, and solidarity with the best causes of humanity. (*Applause*)

Finally, compañeras and compañeros, I wish to reaffirm what I have already expressed in the Sixth and Seventh Party Congresses about the benefit of limiting the nation's principal positions to two five-year terms. Consequently, when the National Assembly of People's Power is constituted

on April 19 of next year, my second and last term leading the state and the government will conclude, and Cuba will have a new president.

It only remains for me to wish you and all our people the warmest congratulations on the occasion of the New Year, year 60 of the Revolution.

Thank you very much. (*Ovation*)

(*Granma*, English translation edited slightly for grammar. Photos: *Granma*, *Cubadebate*, *Prensa Latina*, *TML*, *R. Almirante*)

Venezuela

People's Forces Register Another Electoral Victory



On December 10, mayoral elections were held in Venezuela's 335 municipalities, marking the third set of successfully held elections in less than five months. Elections were held in July for the National Constituent Assembly and in October for state governors. On all three occasions the people demonstrated their support for the Bolivarian Revolution and rejection of the imperialist destabilization campaign to turn them against the Bolivarian Revolution and its leadership, using violence, economic warfare, lies and the threat of military invasion.[1]

In the December 10 elections, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), supported by its allies in the Great Patriotic Pole, won 308 of the 335 mayors' positions -- the largest majority in its history-- and received 70 per cent of the total votes cast. It also won the governorship of Zulia State by a large margin in an election made necessary when the governor-elect from the October election refused to be sworn in by the Constituent Assembly or to recognize its authority.

The three main foreign-inspired and financed opposition parties boycotted this election and called for voter abstention following the resounding defeat they suffered in the October 15 election for state governors. In that election in which they encouraged their supporters to vote, they lost key strongholds to the PSUV and its allies who ended up winning in 18 of 23 states. In spite of the hopes these major players in the fractured and increasingly dysfunctional opposition MUD

coalition placed in their call for a boycott, over 9.3 million Venezuelans voted, translating to a participation rate of 47.2 per cent. While this was lower by close to 11 percentage points than participation in the 2013 municipal elections and close to 14 per cent lower than in the October regional election, the outcome was if anything a pyrrhic victory for these forces and their foreign mentors. Their disingenuous "strategy" ended up costing them key urban centres and the state of Zulia and its capital, Maracaibo, centre of the country's oil industry, which they previously controlled. Meanwhile the majority of politically active eligible voters showed they stand with the Bolivarian government. Among those who spurned the boycott and fielded candidates were 17 national political parties, including some that are or were members of the MUD, and 55 regional organizations. Together, they received a total of 2,749,778 votes nation-wide and won 25 municipalities.



Érika Farías, candidate of the PSUV, elected Mayor of Caracas, received nearly 500,000 votes, representing 66.17 per cent of the total votes.

By turning out in large numbers to participate in the three recent elections and electing members of the PSUV to represent them the Venezuelan people have given their *No* to the forces attempting to overturn the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution and hand Venezuela back to the racist oligarchy which dominated it in the past. Despite this slap in the face, the U.S., Canada and others who have illegitimately given themselves the right to interfere in the affairs of the Venezuelan people and trample their sovereignty have still not resigned themselves to accepting failure.

Instead, these U.S-led forces continue operating on a number of different tracks to achieve their aim of putting Venezuela and its vast resources once again at the disposal of imperialism.

Some of them repeat the fiction that Venezuela is in the midst of a humanitarian crisis for which the solution is one or another type of imperialist "humanitarian intervention." Others are engaged in attempting to gain credibility for setting up a "parallel government" beginning with a so-called Supreme Court in Exile operating out of the offices of the Organization of American States in Washington, DC. Its "judges," appointed by the opposition-controlled National Assembly that continues operating in contempt of the actual Supreme Court, have been assigned the job of having officials of the Venezuelan government indicted for crimes against humanity before the imperialist International Criminal Court at the Hague. Meanwhile, others are calling openly for foreign military intervention to overthrow the government of Nicolás Maduro and crush the people's forces.

None of this dirty work has stopped patriotic and democratic-minded Venezuelans from supporting their Bolivarian Revolution and organizing to defend it. On the contrary, it has inspired many to rise in defence of the gains it has brought and to continue the nation-building

project begun by Hugo Chávez and continued today under the leadership of President Maduro.

TML Weekly congratulates the peoples' forces in Venezuela as well as elsewhere doing battle with the forces of the old that are desperately trying to prevent them from taking their destiny in their own hands. As they work to build their unity in action and work out tactics to defend their projects they are sure to meet with new victories.



Note

1. "Broad Participation in Regional Elections Rebukes Interventionist Forces," *TML Weekly*, October 21, 2017.

(Photos: AVN)

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