

Presentation at the International Meeting in Thessaloniki on the 10th Anniversary of the Imperialist Bombing of Yugoslavia (March 2009)

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Comrades,

It has been ten years since the US and European imperialist bombarded with the most brutal way Yugoslavia; dismantled the country and killed its people.

This meeting, ten years later, is not simply an anniversary, in order to condemn once more the crime that was committed. The main goal of this meeting is today.

We need to understand what happened, why it happened and who did it. What is the relation between what happened then and what is happening today?

We need to understand and reach to the necessary conclusions in order to address more effectively the current situation.

The coup in Romania, the first campaign against Iraq and the Gulf War in 1991 had already taken place.

The next operation was the dismantling of Yugoslavia, and it was considered the key for the imposition of their domination in the Balkans.

This operation was based on the inciting of chauvinism along with existing or non-existing disputes. It was based on the utilization of opportunist cliques which served in a disgraceful way the imperialist plans against their peoples.

Above all it was based on the pressure, the extortion and the use of the most brutal violence. It was facilitated by the retreat and the defeat of the revolutionary working movement, the power that could inspire and organize the resistance and the struggle of the peoples against the imperialist intervention.

It was based on the fact that in Yugoslavia and more particularly Serbia, that was the greater victim, the leading Milosevic team refused to lean, really and completely, on the Yugoslavian idea and the peoples of Yugoslavia but sought the support on the Serbian chauvinism.

The result was:

The dismantling of Yugoslavia

The bloodshed of its peoples
The pollution of land by depleted uranium and other lethal substances
The mutilation of Serbia
The devastation of its economic structure and finally its subjugation

Thus the way opened for the imposition of US and European imperialists' domination in the Balkans. Thus the Balkans turned into a US-NATO base. Thus the way opened for the exploitation of the peoples and the countries in the Balkans.

What has really changed during these last ten years?

Is there really any difference that instead Yugoslavia, Iraq is being slaughtered or Gaza killed? We are convinced that some things haven't changed at all. Some others have differentiated but practically remain the same. And finally there are some things that have really started changing. The exploitative, oppressive and criminal nature of the capitalist-imperialist system that rules the world remains unchangeable.

The general crisis of this system is worsening and forces its ruling powers to readjustments in order to save it and certainly not to change it.

On the other hand, the resistance and the struggle of the working class, the youth and totally the popular masses, is developing all over the world. The awakening process and the reconstruction of popular forces have started. The actual understanding of what is taking place and developing is the primary condition for the orientation of this reconstruction in order to become capable to face effectively both the immediate questions along with the ones related with the perspective of the popular struggle.

There are two conditions on which the capitalist-imperialist system is basing its existence. First, it is the surplus, accumulated by the exploitation of the working class and second it is the plunder, the looting of the wealth and sources of the depended countries by the imperialist metropolises. These relations are based on the violent imposition of the capitalist bourgeoisie on the working class. Along with the violent imposition, that in all cases was initiated by open military intervention, of the imperialist metropolises on the depended countries.

From these fundamental relations originates the violent criminal nature of the imperialist powers, because only in this way they maintain their rule.

The capital never accepted the gains of the working class that it was forced to give due to the struggle of the revolutionary working movement and the threat for the system that was generated by the existence of the socialist countries.

And this is the reason why, when the capitalist restoration in the socialist countries took place along with the retreat and defeat of the communist movement, the capital felt powerful and proceeded in attacking and claiming its historic revanche from the defeated working class. Imperialism never accepted the right of the peoples in the depended countries to independence,

to self-determination and self-reliant economic and social development. Imperialism was forced by the peoples' struggle to make some compromises.

And once again it was the defeat of the communist movement that gave the capacity to those who consider themselves as the owners of the world, to advance to its re-conquest by crashing and bloodshed of the peoples across the world.

On these two fundamental conditions the capitalist-imperialist system was based to launch its attack against the working class and the peoples and formed new conditions, relations and balance of power. The fact that this development had the mantle of neo-liberalism makes small difference, since it could use any other form. It is a fact that these relations will maintain as long as the same conditions and balance of power are not overthrown by the struggle of the working, popular masses.

The forces of the capitalist-imperialist system are trying to maintain and consolidate these relations, in every possible form.

The reasons for seeking readjustments are due to the general crisis of the system. It is a crisis that embraces the whole system along with the forces that compose it. It is about a crisis that has affected every relation and condition of functioning of this system and has emerged in the most acute way in the form of a general crisis. From a general aspect, the economic crises are connected with profit – the mobilizing power of the capitalist-imperialist system. The pursuit of the maximum, possible profit through the “shortest” way is the reason that, in the end, “exhausts” the ability to make profit. The result is that the capitalist economy cannot function any longer. This is what makes crisis unavoidable since the capitalist system cannot uncharged the factor, the force that mobilizes it.

From this point on, the connection of this factor with a series of other conditions and development gives the specific features of every particular crisis; its depth, extent and magnitude. This connection of the economic development with respective, important development and overthrows in the social, political and strategic field made the current crisis a broad and general crisis of the capitalist-imperialist system.

It emerged as a financial-credit crisis and the basic reason was the over-expansion of the financial sector. (The so called “balloon”).

However, on the ground of this over-expansion there was an over-accumulation of assets. The problem was that this over-accumulation of assets didn't lead to investments of respective scale but it was diverted to the direction of fast and easy profit in the stock market field. The results are well known. Another but important issue is under which conditions this accumulation took place. This over-accumulation was the expression and result of the conditions imposed with a dominant way by the western imperialist metropolises basically in the '90s.

It was the intensification of the exploitation of the working class in an unprecedented scale. It was the “flexibility” of labor relations and the abolishment of workers' rights and gains.

It was the plunder of the depended countries that reached to the point of complete devastation of their economies.

This was made possible with the “deregulation” of markets, free flow of assets etc. It was everything that was included in the term “globalization”, in order to become easier to those who were willing to accept it. It was a situation which, combined with other factors, tended to acquire features of an accumulation of primitive character in order to lead – with investments in high technology and broad scale – to a new development of the capitalist system. But this didn’t happen generally. It happened only in a small scale that couldn’t respond to the demands of such an attempt.

The result was the consolidation of the tendencies that led to the financial-credit sector; the “virtual” economy. Even more, imperceptibly but actually it led to a gradual decline of real assets, since they acquire their substance only when they are involved in the process of broad reproduction; namely, the real economy.

Meanwhile there was the over-exploitation of the workers and the plunder of the depended countries.

The interpretation of such a development can be sought, up to a certain degree, in the economic field.

The problem is in the nature and the magnitude of such an attempt. Investments of such a scale require an accumulation of planet size, like the one that was already taking place. At the same time, these investments require the security of depreciation-attribution of profit and this required time. This was exactly the problem and in this point “converge” the economic and political dimension of the issue.

These tendencies and plans developed earlier but they acquired the size we know, basically in the ’90s and they were largely directed by the western imperialist metropolises after the overthrows that brought them in a leading position globally.

The problem was that these plans did not respond to the real given facts and balance of power and at the same time passed by the contradictions of the capitalist-imperialist system.

The US pursuit, to dominate unilaterally in the world, played a catalytic role in the activation and emergence of these contradictions and disputes. It was a pursuit that did not respond to the actual capacity of the US and finally led their strategy to a dead end. At the same time it sharpened the contradiction between the US and the European imperialists and created the crisis conditions in the western euro-Atlantic block.

It accelerated the reconstruction ferment of Russia and its re-emergence with claims globally. It consolidated the tendency of Russia-China approaching and the tendency of anti-rallying against the US. Thus, a framework was formed and facilitated the “emergence” of powers like India, Brazil, Iran etc that claim a position and role in the global balance of power.

The heroic resistance of the Iraqi people was of catalytic significance since it accentuated the dead end of the US strategy and fired the resistance in Afghanistan and the rest of the Muslim world. The reaction of the popular masses against the US-UK attack on Iraq that was expressed with militant demonstrations of millions of people across the world was of decisive importance. It marked the awakening process of the peoples and the reconstruction of their struggle.

At the same time the expansion of the capital's attack against the middle-class strata, even in the imperialist metropolises, increased the rupture that was formed within and in every aspect of the capitalist-imperialist system.

Therefore, the international balance of power was completely different than the one in the '90s; on which the western imperialists based their plans – as the “owners of the world”. In fact, the balance of power that emerged was the expression of a process – reorder of forces – already conducted, in the late '90s.

This process continues and raises the crucial question. What will the future world be, what will the position of each power be? That's why every imperialist power re-evaluates and reforms its strategy.

This is why the leading team Bush-Cheney was replaced in the US, by forces that promoted Obama while similar tendencies are developing in the other imperialist countries.

The current situation and the development

The capitalist-imperialist system tried to face the consequences of this crisis. In this attempt there are some stable conditions and some questions that need solution.

The maintenance of the domination conditions of the capital on the working class, as it was formed the last decades.

The intensification of the exploitation of the working class is considered as the fundamental term on which the system hopes to lean on its exit from the crisis.

The second is to continue and expand the plunder of the wealth and sources of the depended countries by maintaining the whole framework that was formed to make it possible.

No protection measures for the economies of the depended countries the same time that the imperialists are doing this. They have even used military intervention to control the energy resources and the roots of its transportation and distribution.

The third is the attempt to push the consequences of the crisis from one imperialist power to the other and their intensified rivalry despite their declaration for the necessity for coordination and common addressing of the crisis.

The imperialist metropolises disposed immediately some trillions of dollars to save the financial system.

Their next move was to dispose significant assets in order to consolidate immediately their “national” industry and encourage the internal market and economy of each country in order to “protect” them from international rivalry. This is valid for the US and the other imperialist powers.

The financial system was a mechanism that aimed and secured the assets’ flow from the periphery to the center. Even the over-expansion of virtual “economy”, despite it was uncontrollable, had specific aims. Its objective was the appropriation of global wealth and the mortgaging of the one it was to be produced. This looting mechanism, the imperialist metropolises are trying to save. However, this operation in taking place under conditions of fierce rivalry among them – on how they are going to share the – unavoidable – losses. And there is no and there can be no agreement on this.

There is a literature about the New Deal, caused mainly from the Obama measures. We should remind that the US international role is not the same and there isn’t any similar threat from the Revolutionary Working Communist Movement.

All the forces of the system understand that a shrink of international trade will affect both the capitalist-imperialist system as a whole and each one of them.

They all know that a factor that worsened the 1929 crisis was the protectionist measures and the anti-inflation policies. All of them exercise protectionism and all of them... apply it.

There is a crucial question here. The imperialist powers understand that the outcome of their stance to the crisis –how strong or weak they will come out of it – will determine resolutely their position in the new balance of power globally.

Particularly for the US the maintenance of their leading position in the world is connected with whether they will manage, not simply “save” themselves, but whether they will become the leading power that will pull the capitalist economy to recovery. And here is the point where economy and politics “converge” again.

Apparently such a significant issue cannot become the subject of bargain. Nevertheless, the formation of a new balance of power (in every field) has a, more or less, violent character, particularly today. It is certain that the rivalry among the imperialists will intensify in every field and they are going every means to address it.

Therefore the imperialist metropolises redeploy their forces, readjust their strategy, re-elaborate their policies, extend their options and seek allies, either permanent or temporary. This concerns all imperialists, US included.

The most important differentiation, since Obama’s swearing concerns the issue of alliances.

Particularly it concerns the alliance among the US and the European imperialist powers (Euro-Atlantic Coalition).

What is Obama willing to offer to the European imperialists and what are they willing to accept? A first clue is the orientation to transfer the weight center from Iraq to Afghanistan. We believe that the US wants to drag the European imperialists – NATO to new aggressive strategic direction.

Basic goals and pursuits

-Block the stability and expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, where Russia is the main coordinator and is considered as the basic rival of the US.

- Press China to keep a neutral stance.

- Control of Pakistan and persuade India to join their alliance.

- Draw Iran from Russia's influence, which is combined with a different approaching of the Middle East problems. The difference with the attempt of the Bush-Cheney policy of "reforming" the forces in this region is the quest of new "understanding" with these forces and apparently the US playing the main role in it.

Things are not the same as it was ten years ago.

The other imperialist are facing similar problems and try to make similar adjustment. The European imperialists can neither ignore the significance of the Euro-Atlantic alliance nor do they seem willing to follow again and in the same way the US options.

For some time, they try to open their own options in other aspects (of strategic importance i.e. the gas pipe that connects Russia with Germany) and maintain their disputes with Russia (i.e. Ukraine). At the same time they face serious problems that sharpened from the crisis, the contradictions and disputes of the E.U. etc.

Russia responds with "politeness" to Obama's "attempt to understanding", but none of them has any illusions. On the other hand Russia is already facing the impact of the crisis, particularly due to the cutback of oil prices that generates serious problems that it hasn't solved yet completely.

These problems are:

- The formation of a New Bourgeoisie, completely structured and capable to play resolutely its role in the current situation

- The development and expansion of its industrial, economic base and the consolidation of its internal market

- The formation of a social and economic structure that will become the strong “internal” base of its “external” activities

Apparently Russia is going to claim an, all the more, increased role in the international development using every possible means.

China, for the time being, does not give in either to the pressure or the openings of the US. At the same time it avoids to commit with a conclusive way to its alliance with Russia, in order to maintain the ability to choose according the circumstances. It also understands the problems of its access to the international market.

On the other hand, the class struggle is aggravating since the resistance of the working class and peasantry is increasing against the brutal exploitation and oppression of the New Bourgeoisie. Japan is under the US strategic custody. At the same time its powerful economy, its prime field, is strongly affected by the economic crisis.

There are other countries as well (like India, Brazil etc) that emerged and claim their role in the balance of power that is being formed.

This current period is characterized by the aggravation of every contradiction in the world, the confrontation even the collisions that may take place.

- It is the contradiction between capital and labor
- It is the contradiction between imperialism and peoples
- It is the contradiction and the rivalry among the imperialist powers
- It is the aggravation of class struggle in every form and expression

Such a perspective sets forth, in the strongest and most urgent way, the necessity for the development of popular resistance and struggle. The necessity to re-organize the popular forces in, an all the more, higher level, in order to be able to answer effectively both the immediate problems and the ones that concern the perspective of this struggle.

The awakening process of the popular masses has already started all over the world. There is a development in the struggle of the working class, the youth and peoples in every struggle front. The struggles that develop, the mobilization, the revolts are the hopeful prelude of what is coming.

But this development continues to be characterized by serious problems and shortcomings. These shortcomings are connected with the impact of the defeat of the revolutionary communist movement.

It is the negative balance of power that was formed globally; the same that hinders the development of the revolutionary process in Nepal and permits to Zionists to bloodshed Gaza. Particularly they are connected with the consequences for the movement from the long-term

prevailing of revisionist, reformist and opportunist forces. Such views and concepts continue to prevail and disorientate the movement.

Apparently the development of popular struggle and the level that is required presumes the overcome, in a process, of these shortcomings and the rejection of all this reformist, opportunist, and ideological rubbish.

It will happen easy, quickly and simply. It is process of struggle, already conducted. It is about a re-organizing process of the popular forces that is already developing through various ways, forms and expressions.

At the same time it is a complex process of reconstruction of the Revolutionary Working Communist Movement of our era.

This isn't the plan or the decision of anyone; it is developing on the base of the objective reality.

It is generated by the sharpening of class struggle and the demands it sets forth every day.

It is generated by the necessity to answer the questions that form the nature of the movement nowadays.

The forces that refer to the Left should answer whether and in what way and orientation they are involved in this process of struggle.

Whether they join and merge with the people in their struggle for what is theirs.

Whether they have stable the direction of the nonnegotiable and unconditional confrontation with the forces of the system to the end.

Whether it is clear for them that the answers to the problems of the movement are within it and there they can and should seek them.

Whether they actually understand that their position and role in this re-organizing, reconstruction process is connected with their differentiation within it in order to rise to the level of the higher demands, set forth by the development in our era.

I'll return to the Balkans to set forth only one issue.

It is the issue that was set forth when the imperialist intervention started in the region.

It is the necessity of a struggle front of the Balkan peoples. A front that had it existed then, would have brought serious problems to the imperialist raid.

The development ever since then makes the necessity of such a front even more obvious and urgent.

The US and the European imperialists imposed their rule in the Balkans, after the slaughter in Yugoslavia.

They imposed the creation of protectorates under their control.

They imposed the installation of several US/NATO bases.

They turned the Balkans into launch point of their aggressive imperialist opportunisms.

They imposed the exploitation and oppression of the Balkan peoples, they condemned them to underdevelopment and comprador economy.

The economic crisis showed the consequence of this development; unemployment and indigence. The imperialist address them like countries and people of lower category.

Let this meeting become a step in the direction of creating of this Front of Struggle of the Balkan peoples against their enemies; to develop the struggle against the imperialist bases and troops in the Balkans, against the imperialist intervention, the imperialist presence and their puppets in the region.

To pave the way, through struggle and for the unity of the Balkan peoples, to overthrow this exploitation and oppression system.