

On the Invasion of Panama

– Statement by the Committee of the RIM

The Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement strongly condemns the U.S. imperialist aggression against Panama, and supports all the forms of resistance being carried out against the invaders.

The U.S. government sent its 24,000 troops swarming out of the Canal Zone in a manner meant to be as brutal and bloody as possible. Panama is vital to the U.S., because of the Canal, and because the huge military facilities of the U.S. Army Southern Command headquartered in Panama is the nerve centre for U.S. military activities in the region and the springboard for future aggression and wars. But Noriega and his 10,000-man forces had long been on the U.S. payroll, and did not represent a real threat to U.S. domination. The main point of this invasion was to serve as a demonstration of American military might, to intimidate the peoples of the region which the U.S. has long called its “backyard”, and to prepare politically and militarily for even greater crimes.

The U.S. imperialists seek to reinforce their authority in Central America and South America, in the face of an increasingly unstable situation, including the mood and revolutionary potential of the masses of people brought about by U.S. exploitation and domination. In the last few years the crisis of the imperialist system as well as the continuing manoeuvres by their Soviet imperialist rivals have made this situation all the more explosive.

The U.S. is inciting its murderous puppets in El Salvador, stepping up threats against Nicaragua (despite Sandinista efforts to appease them), and intervening in Colombia. Under the guise of the same “war on drugs” that has served as a pretext in Panama, the U.S. has already installed a military base in Peru, escalating its attempts to stop the revolutionary war led by the Maoist Communist Party of Peru, which alone in Latin America is unleashing and relying upon the armed strength of the masses. Positive and negative experience in Latin America and the rest of the world shows that only such a people’s war can really defeat the imperialists, and nothing less than total defeat will do.

In Panama, after the initial thrust in which U.S. helicopter gun-ships firing rockets destroyed a good part of the capital, the fighting took on the character of a war by imperialist troops against the masses of downtrodden people who rose up, in poorly-armed crowds and in some cases with rifles, against all the armoured might of the invaders. They robbed the U.S. of the quick and cheap victory it sought in a country created by the U.S. army in 1903 (when the U.S. stole Panama from Colombia to have a place to put the canal it needed to widen its empire) and which the U.S. has invaded nine times since then.

Drugs were an excuse for the invasion, but it was the world’s biggest drug traffickers themselves who attacked Panama. First as CIA head and then as Vice-President, Bush himself was Noriega’s boss. Another former CIA Director, Admiral Stansfield Turner, asked, “Do we really want Noriega on trial and talking about his past secret relationships?”

The invasion and the continuing U.S. occupation of Panama must not go unopposed. Further, the RIM Committee calls on people to be on their guard against further imperialist aggression in the wake of this invasion.

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