

Letters from our readers

5 July 2006

The following is a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.

On "US Supreme Court issues more anti-democratic rulings"

As for antidemocratic, the business of the campaign financing ruling is, economically speaking (as most everything is), extremely antidemocratic. The opinion that the limit is "too low" shows that the Court is not doing its job. The only question is "are limits justifiable or not"? Democratically speaking, of course they are. As for the death penalty business, well, that's just purely unconstitutional. It blatantly contradicts the Eighth Amendment (as I'm sure *we* all know). It runs contrary to the writings of Cesare Beccaria [his "On Crimes and Punishments (1764)" spoke specifically against capital punishment]. Such "constructionists" as Scalia should be well aware of all of this. Yes, Scalia reinforces his own hypocrisy in claiming that the anti-death penalty stance of other nations is antidemocratic. One wonders where he gets his definition of democracy.

RV

Athens, Georgia, US

29 June 2006

On "North Korean 'missile crisis'—another example of unbridled US militarism"

I am currently reading a book entitled *Strange Liberators*, by Gregory Elich, wherein he devotes several chapters to the history of the relations between North Korea and the United States. Beginning in the Clinton administration, it was North Korea that was eager and willing to stop its use of nuclear power if the US would provide a replacement. A deal was made that the US would assure supplies of crude oil. This deal was sabotaged and ultimately dumped by the Bush administration upon achieving office. The US had also promised to build two light-water reactors for energy purposes. These were started but after endless delays and outrageous demands made by the US—effectively "regime change" (that good old standby)—the work was stopped and the reactors never built.

Everything reported about the true nature of the "conflict" with North Korea (conducted in the same way as the demands made on Saddam Hussein and now on Iran) has been a lie. The North Koreans have no desire to threaten anyone. But the belligerent attitude of the US and its continuing demands against the sovereignty of N. Korea have made the Koreans justifiably worried about being invaded.

In a story new to me, I learned that the Clinton administration was actively preparing for nuclear attacks on N. Korea as early as 1993! No matter how many times the N. Korean government acquiesced to demands and attempted to have face-to-face negotiations with the US, no change in the US's demands was

forthcoming.

This "crisis" is definitely US-created against N. Korea because the US cannot abide any country that is closed to neoconservative plunder and markets. The American charges of human rights violations, for example, seem to be based upon whether or not the government being charged is "friendly to US [business] interests" or not. The same was true of Yugoslavia, which was destroyed because it refused to let the IMF and World Bank come in and "restructure" it in favor of the global oligarchy.

I would warn all readers that any stories you hear or read about the situation in North Korea in the mainstream media should be taken with a massive grain of salt. Thanks to the WSWs for following this story.

CZ

San Francisco, California

29 June 2006

On "Pentagon report targets China as military threat"

The political reality that the Pentagon's report and mainstream America will never admit is that the American Empire is a clear and present threat to China and literally much of the world.

It is chilling how the USA almost instinctively demonizes this or that nation as a military threat (see Iraq, Iran, North Korea), even as America has recently committed the "supreme international crime" of aggressive wars against peace three times in the span of four years (Yugoslavia-1999, Afghanistan-2001, and Iraq-2003). This is not to mention America's other "defensive" wars such as Vietnam, Korea, Latin America, Somalia, etc., which have murdered millions of people and inflicted devastation upon the Third World.

Indeed, the USA launched the "War on Terrorism" as a pretext to seize energy resources, encircle nations like China, Russia, and Iran, and establish what the American military calls Full Spectrum Dominance. In 2001, for instance, the USA announced a nuclear war doctrine threatening the potential use of nuclear weapons against seven nations, including China. More recently, the semi-official US Council on Foreign Relations boasted that America's nuclear arsenal soon will gain first-strike superiority over Russia and China and thus initiate an era of "US nuclear primacy." And then there is America's stated policy of preemptive war and regime change, its lust to impose a "New American Century" over the planet, and the fact that the USA spends more on its military budget than the next dozen nations combined.

Yet despite all this, the USA is once again talking up another looming "threat" to its so-called interests. Such astounding arrogance!

And one wonders why any honest person would accept as good coin US "analyses" of the Chinese military or that of any other

nation. This is an America that has been caught lying about the “threat” of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction; is transparently attempting to justify aggression against Iran under this same WMD pretext; is waging a war for global domination disguised behind the mask of anti-terrorism; and, most damning, has probably directed “Al Qaeda” terrorism against its own people and others—as 9/11 truth activists believe about the Reichstag Fire of September 11.

This tradition of lies is not surprising given the history of the USA. Throughout the Cold War, America engaged in similar forms of strategic deception about the Soviet “threat”, as evidenced by its promotion in the 1960s of a mythical ballistic Missile Gap with the USSR. Or as demonstrated by the propaganda of “Team B” Neoconservatives and groups like the Committee on the Present Danger, which in the 1970s railed about the overwhelming might of the Soviet Union—only a decade and half before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

If any other nation had the same record of lies and military aggression as that of the USA, its periodic threat, accusations and political legitimacy in general would be shredded in an instant. Not so for the Land of the Free. American invasions, bombings, coups, and covert terrorism have effectively become normalized and tacitly accepted as legitimate by much of the political Left, Center, and Right. This is a testament to the hegemonic power of the imperialist American worldview and the global US media.

From this US perspective, American serial wars of aggressions do not even politically register as aggression, but are ultimately rationalized by the nationalist ideology of American Exceptionalism and a messianic creed that the USA is a crusader for democracy. America’s Manifest Destiny, it appears, is to rule the world for its own good. Hitler would be jealous of such imperial ambitions.

In fact, the Pentagon report’s own questions (“Why this growing investment? Why these continuing large and expanding arms purchases? Why these continuing robust deployments?”) can be put to the United States with much greater justification.

For in terms of military power, spending, declared strategic doctrine, geopolitical intent, and most importantly actual behavior, the American Empire has demonstrated time and again that the preeminent menace is itself.

BN

27 June 2006

On “Pentagon report on China highlights danger of nuclear war”

I spent two years in China and at one point I asked my friends about the size of the Chinese military. They were much better informed than the average American and went on to tell me how their military expenses paled compared to the US and how they see the US as a real threat. I did a bit of reading, and it turns out that the US fought the Chinese forces of Mao after WWII and supported a Chinese leader the people never wanted. It does seem that America is the real threat. All of the Chinese people I met wanted peace.

Thanks for the article.

BF

26 June 2006

On “Bush administration compiling massive database of bank

records”

Thanks for the insightful article. I’d like to add that this year for the first time my accountant has requested a new piece of personal financial information to be enclosed with my 1040: according to the Patriot Act, the government specifically requests the disclosure of any type of foreign account (bank or other) and whether the outstanding balance is above \$10,000 (I believe there is also another bracket for balances above \$100,000). The implications of the current attacks on democratic rights are well beyond the boundaries of the US alone. Such policies are carried out with the full complicity of other governments which, just like in the case of the war in Iraq, have given full support to the criminal and illegal character of US imperialism.

Fraternally.

MW

25 June 2006

On “McCoy Tyner with Stanley Clarke and Al Foster —piano trio in the spirit of Coltrane”

I just saw the McCoy Tyner Trio live, and considering the performance, I’m glad to see they’ve been mentioned here before. They played at the Clifford Brown Jazz Festival in Wilmington, Delaware, a festival which is free because of its immense corporate backing. The Tyner trio stood out amongst other artists. They had immense energy and skill, but also a sense of musical daring. This trio would not simply play classic jazz backgrounds with a solo overtop. Rather, complex interaction between the members was the main form the music took. I really enjoyed their performance. Thanks for providing me and others with more information about the group.

JL

Wilmington, Delaware, US

25 June 2006

On “US Senate backs indefinite occupation of Iraq”

I am puzzled as to how the rest of the world is tolerating and accepting without a word of protest or discontent, the unjustified invasion and continued occupation of Iraq by the US!

JP

India

23 June 2006



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