

COP27 climate summit overshadowed by US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine

Bryan Dyne
9 November 2022

The beginning of the United Nations climate summit COP27, being held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, has been overshadowed by the drive to increase oil and natural gas production in the United States and Europe as a result of the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine. Since the war began, the Biden administration in particular has pledged to deliver tens of billions of cubic meters of natural gas to Europe, promising a corresponding increase of greenhouse gas emissions and exposing the environmentalist pretensions of his administration and the American government as a whole.

As has been known for decades, and what was again made clear during the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, there is an urgent need to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to abate and reverse global warming. Thousands of workers and toilers die and millions are displaced around the world each year, especially in the most impoverished regions, as a result of the more or less unregulated release of carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere as the world's corporations and nations compete with one another for global dominance.

The colossal floods that began across Pakistan in June are among the most advanced expression of the climate crisis. Torrents of water that came from glacial melting in the Himalayas and unusually heavy rain have killed at least 1,700, injured more than 12,000 and displaced at least 33,000,000.

Climate models predict that such disasters will become increasingly regular if the current warming trend continues. And floods, hurricanes, wildfires, polar vortexes and other forms of extreme weather are known to be the precursors to even more lethal climate-induced catastrophes.

None of these issues, however, are being seriously addressed at COP27. There have been many speeches by various figures, including heads of state, calling for “climate justice,” code for increased funding to combat the effects of climate change in developing nations. UN Secretary General António Guterres warned that the world is on a “highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator.”

But as with all previous climate summits, from last year's COP26 at Glasgow, Scotland to the 2015 Paris Accord and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, none of the various speeches and agreements deal with the underlying cause of the climate crisis: capitalism and the drive for private profit.

The ongoing war in Ukraine serves as an example of this process. Just one day after the Russian military was provoked into its invasion, a US-based liquefied natural gas (LNG) lobbying group, called LNG Allies, wrote a letter to the Biden administration demanding at least \$300 million in new infrastructure to establish “virtual transatlantic gas pipelines” in order to bolster domestic production.

The letter also called on the Department of Energy to “immediately approve” applications to further export LNG under the guise of helping to prevent “energy insecurity” in Europe. The administration moved swiftly, approving two such applications in March and a further two in April. It noted then that it expected US exports of the commodity to increase by 20 percent by the end of 2022.

These shifts were paralleled by an announcement between Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen that the US would provide an additional 15 billion cubic meters of LNG in 2022 to help “end [the European Union's] dependence on Russian fossil fuels.” According to an article in the

Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, about half of US gas production will be used as exports when the ongoing fossil fuel infrastructure plans are complete.

This has resulted in a financial bonanza for gas companies. Cheniere, which is based out of Houston, Texas, has so far increased its profits by \$3.8 billion this year. Sempra, which provides natural gas to nearly 40 million people in California, Texas and Mexico, had its stock value spike by more than 25 percent in the weeks after the war began.

Militaries themselves are also immense emitters of greenhouse gases. A report from Boston University published in 2019 entitled “Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War” by Neta Crawford, co-director of the Costs of War project, found that the US military is among the largest polluters in the world, releasing more greenhouse gases than whole countries, including Sweden and Denmark. It explicitly noted that the wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Syria have released at least 400 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, about a third of the total released by the Pentagon since 2001.

No reference was made to these facts, however, at COP27. Instead, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky provided a diatribe against Russia, claiming that “deliberate Russian actions” have “brought about an energy crisis that has forced dozens of countries to resume coal-fired power generation.” He continued, again referring to Russia, “There are still many for whom climate change is just rhetoric or marketing, not real action.”

In reality, no government, from Russia, to Ukraine, to the United States, has a plan of “real action” to deal with climate change. Recent estimates suggest that \$100 billion is needed each year to reverse global warming, a number which has never been achieved. Yet tens of billions of dollars have been provided to fund the Ukrainian military’s purchase of advanced weapons from the US and its allies needed to fight against Russia. And that is nothing to say of the trillions that have been used to bail out US banks and corporations since 2008.

These staggering sums being spent on war and bailouts did not stop John Kerry, former Democratic presidential candidate and current Special Presidential Envoy for Climate under Biden, from stating Tuesday that “No government in the world has enough money to

affect the transition.” He continued, “The entity that could help the most is the private sector with the right structure.”

Kerry, in two sentences, expresses the orientation of the entire capitalist social order. There is no money to deal with the vast pressing social problems of the day—climate change, social inequality, COVID-19—but unending sums for war and the enrichment of the financial oligarchy. And any initiatives that are set up to ostensibly deal with these issues must be subordinated to private profit.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)