

Americas Summit in Washington discusses plans for global war

Andrea Lobo

3 November 2023

On Thursday and Friday, the Biden administration hosted the first Summit of the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity (APEP), a platform to promote the integration of supply chains across the Americas in preparation for economic and military confrontation with China.

While the topic was only mentioned in passing, the backdrop of Israel's genocidal assault against Gaza ultimately defined the summit's main political significance. It took place as the US government loses control of the narrative surrounding the war, and as its role as the main power enabling politically, materially and strategically a genocide against the Palestinians and provoking a regional war is becoming clear to masses around the world.

At this crucial juncture, the decision by the pseudo-left Presidents Gabriel Boric of Chile and Gustavo Petro of Colombia to travel to the White House for the summit and to meet with President Joe Biden was politically criminal. Their presence offered a political cover to Washington as it takes part in crimes reminiscent of the Nazis: the pulverization of thousands of Palestinian children and civilians and the displacement of millions.

On Tuesday, Boric and Petro had recalled their ambassadors from Israel to protest the onslaught, and Petro has specifically said that "the US government has a great political responsibility" in what is taking place.

But their meetings, photo-ops, smiles and conversations with Biden, whose hands are elbow-deep in the blood of the Palestinians, are the clearest demonstration that the eruption of imperialism is hampering the ability of the Latin American ruling elites to even pretend to play an independent, progressive or democratic role.

"I told Biden that the massacre could not be allowed to continue," Petro told reporters. Biden did not respond, but at least he had "stated its position on record," he added cynically.

Petro also applauded the US-led summit as a "historic initiative that will serve as an opportunity to continue working on sustainable economic development under the principles of social and climate justice."

At a time when "Genocide Joe" is trending on social media, Gabriel Boric told Biden during their meeting on Thursday that he "hoped to someday reach as far as you" in his political career.

He said to reporters afterward that they had a "fruitful and frank" meeting. Then, Boric condemned the attacks by Hamas on October 7 three times, while also stating that Israel's attacks are "unacceptable," "disproportionate," and a "violation of humanitarian international law." He concluded, "We do not accept being forced to choose sides."

On Friday, Boric added: "I leave with the peace of mind that President Biden, I know, shares my concerns" about the Israeli assault on Gaza.

For his part, the pseudo-left Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador sent his Foreign Secretary Alicia Barcena to lead the Mexican delegation. His government had refused to condemn Israel until Wednesday, when the Mexican representative to the UN said that the assault on Gaza "violates international law" and "could constitute war crimes."

Boric, Petro and López Obrador are speaking from both sides of their mouths and are chiefly concerned about covering their own subordination to imperialism and its agenda of war and dictatorship, which was the essence of the discussions during the APEP summit.

As described by an anonymous US official to Reuters as the summit began: "We are talking about building competitive regional supply chains that can compete in the market, and that means competing against China."

Another official said the US-led Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) will offer a new financing platform for countries, which has the aim of expanding the use of cheap labor and key natural resources in the region.

The sponsors of a bipartisan bill called "The Americas Act," Bill Cassidy (R-La) and Michael Bennet (D-Co) spoke at the IDB session on Thursday. Their proposal includes "bolting on" other Latin American countries to the US Mexico Canada Agreement, if they meet US criteria.

Essentially such trade and financing promises are aimed at

pressuring regional elites to decouple from China and suppress migration, but there is little difference from initiatives undertaken by the Obama administration that gained no traction in terms of investments.

Last month, the Washington-based Wilson Center warned that US economic displacement by China was “undermining U.S. leadership in the region.” Between 2001 and 2020, it found the share of Latin America’s population living in countries more reliant economically on China than the US grew from 3 percent to 60 percent. “The United States faces significant challenges mobilizing private sector capital for foreign policy purposes,” the think-tank wrote.

Similarly, the center’s Cynthia Arnson recently said: “We must provide some alternative. Dollar for dollar, the U.S. will never be able to match the deep pockets of Chinese investment banks.”

Significantly, during the summit, Mexico’s Alicia Bárcena declared that Mexico is “the country for nearshoring,” that is moving production of semi-conductors and other strategic products explicitly away from Asia and closer to the US market. Despite later calling for “incorporating the rest of the region into this strategy,” the tone clearly points to competition between regional ruling elites for investments that ultimately undermines any actual “integration.”

While the talks in the summit focused on economic investments, US imperialism is increasingly relying on its military power and anti-democratic conspiracies, threats and devastating sanctions to secure its control over the region.

The Biden administration has continued to send US troops to bolster the Peruvian regime of Dina Boluarte, which carried out several massacres of demonstrators opposing the US-backed coup that installed her last December. Washington also recently agreed to carry out military operations in Ecuador, whose outgoing President Guillermo Lasso has also used deadly violence against demonstrations, recently dissolved Parliament and oversaw the country’s first elections under a military state of exception. Both were present for the summit.

On Thursday, Biden also held a personal meeting with Dominican President Luis Abinader, a multimillionaire reactionary who closed the border with Haiti last month and has led appeals along with Washington for accelerating the deployment of a multinational military force in Haiti, which was approved last month by the UN Security Council.

Abinader’s unreserved support for Israel’s genocidal campaign in Gaza and fawning praise for Biden’s “leadership” in resolving the “historic situation” in Haiti should be a warning to workers about the levels of brutality imperialism and its client elites are prepared to use to suppress the class struggle erupting throughout the region.

The Summit also featured the participation of the right-

wing heads of state of Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Barbados.

The narrative advanced by officials in Washington consists of describing Chinese economic influence as an “aggression” against countries in the region and the United States itself, claiming that Beijing is corrupting officials, destabilizing societies and causing mass migration.

It is doubtful that anyone believes such nonsense, which ignores the century of US imperialism invading countries south of its border, backing coups, installing dictators and enforcing the interests of Wall Street—not least the decades of indebtedness, austerity and privatizations known as the “Washington Consensus.” The current rhetoric surrounding US policy toward Latin America merges economic competition with active preparations for war.

As the last three decades of endless wars metastasize into a world conflict between nuclear-armed powers and genocidal campaigns as in Gaza, it is becoming crystal clear that capitalism is incompatible with peace, democracy, and independence.

The nefarious project of turning Latin America into a platform for Wall Street and the Pentagon to pursue their drive for global domination is rapidly being undermined by its own contradictions. Above all, it is setting the stage for mass opposition against the client elites and all capitalist institutions.

The working class is objectively the only social force that can lead the struggle against imperialism and war. However, while the class struggle and a mass movement against war are escalating around the world, the social and political consciousness of workers about what is at stake still lags behind the current shift in the objective situation and the tasks it poses.

The building of a Trotskyist political leadership in the working class—as sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in every country—has never been more urgent to prepare and fight for the independent and revolutionary political mobilization of the working class against capitalism, which produces war, inequality, dictatorship, and fascism.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact