Mexico and Peru join US military exercise preparing for war against China

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While Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) often poses as a defender of sovereignty in Mexico and the region against US imperialism, he has both militarized Mexico and integrated the Mexican military into US-NATO plans for global war to unprecedented levels.

In the past weeks, his government joined the fascistic Peruvian regime of Dina Boluarte in sending the first foreign troops to ever participate in the Steel Knight military exercise organized yearly by the Pentagon as an unmistakable preparation for war against nuclear-armed China.

On December 5, the US Naval Institute reported: "Throughout Steel Knight, the Marines are training with San Diego-based Expeditionary Strike Group 3 and U.S. Third Fleet units in maritime scenarios that will include Peruvian and Mexican amphibious warfare ships supporting humanitarian assistance training scenarios." The 1st Marine Division spokesman Capt. Joseph Di Pietro stated: "We are really excited to incorporate the Mexican and the Peruvian navies in this exercise."

Outside of US military outlets, the participation of Mexico and Peru in these exercises—for three weeks ending on December 15—has not been reported by any corporate outlet or mentioned by any major government official in the US or Mexico.

Earlier this month, in response to a national scandal over his invitation of armed US trainers to Mexico, AMLO declared: "It is not an intrusion or infringement on our sovereignty. Times have changed since they used to enter without asking for permission."

The difference today is that AMLO has become a Trojan horse, opening the gates for US imperialism. His administration has turned Mexico and its new National Guard into an extension of the US border patrol, while Mexico has become so essential to US imperialism that defense contractors said they could not operate in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic with Mexican supplier plants closed.

Now, the Mexican Navy is training to become "interoperable" with the same US Marine Division that invaded and occupied the Port of Veracruz in 1914, when Woodrow Wilson turned its embargo of arms shipments against the Mexican Revolution into a direct military invasion that killed hundreds of Mexican soldiers. As the US prepared to enter World War I, plans were also drawn by Wilson to re-invade and take over an entire swath from Veracruz in the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, as well as oil fields in Tampico.

This month's exercise demonstrates how far advanced preparations for war against China are, and that Latin America would become a battlefield in a Third World War.

With more than 7,000 US Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force personnel, the exercise involved "the planning, deployment and command and control of a joint force against a peer or near-peer adversary combat force," as explained in the captions of photos showing Peruvian and Mexican service members during the exercise.

The terms "peer" or "near-pear" are being used by Washington interchangeably to describe China and Russia. Just last week, Congress rushed through the approval of a record Pentagon budget in preparation for "future warfare against near-peer competitors (war with Russia, China or another major power)," according to the House summary.

The US Naval Institute adds: "Steel Knight's overall scenario incorporates an expansive battlespace that replicates the Indo-Pacific islands-chain conflict scenario envisioned by military leaders."

The US military has published photographs online showing Mexican and Peruvian troops on a landing craft with US Marines and Sailors at Base Camp Pendleton in California on November 30. Then, a series of photos show

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the Mexicans and Peruvians joined by Philippine marines on December 7 touring the USS San Diego (LPD-22) warship as part of the Dawn Blitz exercise.

This activity sought to test the ability "to conduct amphibious operations in response to global crisis and project power ashore," according to the caption.

The plans for war against China are not being disguised by US officials or the corporate media and have been in place for over a decade. The *New York Times* reported this weekend on a jungle warfare exercise that took place in October-November and included numerous Asia-Pacific nations.

The *Times* wrote: "The jungle buildup, with roots in the 'pivot to Asia' under President Barack Obama, highlights the challenge the U.S. military faces as it tries to prioritize China and unbind itself from decades of war in the Middle East, even as conflict there pulls America back in."

AMLO has explicitly declared his alignment with the US-led war drive against China. During a North American summit in 2021, for instance, AMLO called for "stopping" China.

He explained: "If the trend of the last decade continues, by 2051, China would dominate 42 percent of the world market and we, the United States, Mexico and Canada, would be left with 12 percent, which in addition to being an unacceptable disproportion in the economic field, would keep alive the temptation to bet on solving this disparity with the use of force, which would put all of us in danger."

The López Obrador administration is in fact preparing along with Biden to "resolve that disparity through force."

This integration is rooted in the interests of the Mexican oligarchy in attracting investments by offering cheap labor and natural resources to US imperialism, especially with the near-shoring to North America as the US escalates its economic and military confrontation against China.

During a visit by US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen this month, the AMLO administration agreed to let Washington screen foreign investments into the country, on the basis of "national security concerns" particularly targeting Chinese firms.

"We want to see further deepening of our economic relationship with respect to our supply chains, supply chain resilience," said Yellen.

AMLO has also given the military unprecedented control over the management of infrastructure projects, ports, airports and the economy as a whole, and requested an 81 percent increase in the military's budget for next year. The material interests of the corrupt Mexican military have become entirely aligned with this broader integration with US imperialism.

This process has also exposed AMLO's claims to defend democracy, which have prominently included denunciations against the US-backed coup that installed the Dina Boluarte regime in Peru one year ago. Last May, AMLO criticized the Biden administration for sending 700 US troops to train the Peruvian armed forces. "They killed 70 people who were protesting. I cannot remain silent in the face of this," he said.

The participation of the Philippine Marines is not less significant. The current President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. sees his regime as a defender and continuator of the legacy of the US-backed dictatorship of his parents, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, which killed thousands and detained and tortured tens of thousands of workers, peasants and youth.

Earlier this year, AMLO said the Peruvian coup took place because "a Peruvian oligarchy, but above all a foreign one, is plundering Peru's natural resources... And they need to have a puppet, a dummy, a ruler and a Congress to suit them."

The same description can be applied to AMLO, who embodies the dead-end of all Latin American nationalist programs in the age of globalization, wars and revolutions.

Workers in Mexico and across Latin America have no interest in going to war and killing their class brothers and sisters in China, many of whom are exploited by the same transnational corporations. Their own struggles against the corrupt Mexican ruling class and military and foreign capital are part of the upsurge of the class struggle internationally, as well as the emerging global mass movement against war that has seen millions protesting the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza.

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