

**Balance sheet for a year of  
imperialist war and legitimacy  
of the positions of internationalists**



**Internationalist Voice**

The Russian–Ukraine (NATO) imperialist war has reached its one-year anniversary. A balance sheet now needs to be drawn up of the duties of revolutionaries and internationalists in the face of this imperialist war; a balance sheet of the forces of the imperialist powers and, most importantly, the position of the working class in the wake of this war, so that we can determine the internationalist horizon and perspective, looking back over the past year.

Groups within the international communist left have declared that workers have no country to defend it, and workers' blood should not be shed in an attempt to define the capitalists' homeland. The struggle of wage slaves is pitted against the exploitation and brutality of global capitalism. These groups have declared allegiance to the tradition of the Zimmerwald Conference, a political tradition that has fought for internationalism against imperialist wars (and continues to do so), and they have issued a joint statement. The joint statement emphasizes that although today's conditions are different from those of 1915, the basic principles of internationalism versus the might of imperialism (adopted at the Zimmerwald Conference) are still valid today:

**No support of either imperialist camp; the rejection of all pacifist illusions; and the recognition that only the working class and its revolutionary struggle could put an end to the system that is based on the exploitation of labour power and permanently generates imperialist war.**

In line with the rhetoric of demagogues in democratic countries who have declared that Putin's attack on Ukraine constitutes an attack on democracy, and their calls to defend democracy against this dictator's brutality, the material grounds of this imperialist war must be exposed to the public. In an era of capitalist decline, war has become inescapable for many countries, and not a year goes by without some form of war somewhere on this earth. If we leave aside the lies of the Democrats, the goal of the US and NATO has been to encircle Russia through the incorporation of former Eastern Bloc countries into NATO or to launch "colour revolutions" in countries that were not formerly members of NATO. After the fall of the Soviet Union, it took time for Russia to assert its imperialist ambitions as a claimant to world power. Russia did not want Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO; rather, it hoped for withdrawal of NATO military equipment from these countries and failure of the NATO blockade, so that Russia could then expand its sphere of influence.

Following the collapse of the bipolar world, the US was no longer able to exercise its hegemony as it had done during the Cold War. Therefore, in order to maintain its hegemony in the new world order and to weaken its rivals, the US tried to line up the other imperialist powers behind itself by waging wars, albeit with humanitarian words.

In recent years, however, the countries that made up the former Western bloc have become more fragmented than before. Although NATO expanded after the end of the Cold War, with France and a number of eastern European countries joining it, internal divisions within NATO member states intensified. French President Macron has publicly stated that NATO has suffered brain death [1]. The US has tried to downplay its presence in NATO, and John Bolton, Trump's former national security adviser, declared that if Trump won the election, the US would leave NATO [2]. Italy, a major European member of NATO and where US nuclear weapons are based, has shown interest in the New Silk Road. The US has imposed sanctions on Turkey, which is a member of NATO and also has US nuclear weapons. Tensions between NATO members Turkey and Greece over oil exploration and drilling escalated to the point where France sent a warship to the Mediterranean

Sea for the purposes of “regional control”. Britain has remained far removed from other European countries.

On the other hand, China is an economic competitor for the US. The strategy of trying to contain China started long before Trump’s presidency, and Biden has continued to enforce this policy. Examination of developments that have occurred whilst the war in Ukraine has been raging shows that in the new conditions, the US, by lining up NATO and other countries behind it, has tried to create serious obstacles to China’s progress and imperialist ambitions in the name of the “New Silk Road”.

The events of the last year also show that the Russian military operation has been in the interests of the US in the short term, and the US has been able to consolidate its hegemony for the time being. Having cut trade ties with Russia, the EU has become partly dependent on the US for energy. It is apparent that Russia underestimated the humiliating US withdrawal from Afghanistan and thought that, given the differences between Western countries, the US would not be able to organize resistance against Russia and Russia can not only take advantage of the existing differences but also fuel those differences.

NATO has significantly increased its presence in eastern Europe, and two new countries – Finland and Sweden – are joining NATO. The important point here is that Sweden is a country that was “neutral” during World War I, World War II and has not entered into any war in the past 200 years, yet now feels that it must join the NATO military alliance. This shows the new arrangement of imperialist powers in the new world conditions.

Although the US has lined up NATO member countries, Japan and Australia, etc., behind it, apparently forming a united front, NATO’s iron front has had cracks from the very beginning. Two key NATO members – France and Germany – are openly pursuing their own imperialist interests, and this issue will threaten the NATO alliance in the long run. *Politico*, an American magazine, recently published an article entitled “Berlin doesn’t trust Washington” [3], discussing NATO’s internal disagreements regarding sending tanks. France will not have forgotten its recent punishment meted out by the US and the UK, terminating its submarine contract with Australia. Turkey’s objection to acceptance of Finland and Sweden into NATO shows the weakness of the united front. Turkey is a member of NATO, but recently, Ibrahim Kalin, spokesman for the Turkish presidency, pointed out that Turkey does not support Western sanctions against Russia, and he said:

*“Ankara will not join Western sanctions against Moscow, they will do more damage to Turkey's economy than Russia's...the world community does not have sufficient desire to create conditions for serious negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, which makes it impossible to negotiate a peace agreement on the issue of Ukraine...Europe and the USA should also participate in possible negotiations for the settlement of the situation in Ukraine, at the same time, any peace plan regarding Ukraine will be doomed to failure if Russia's opinion is not taken into account.” [4]*

Another important issue is that while Russia seeks to expand its sphere of influence through the Ukraine war, Turkey is also expanding its influence in Central Asia, which is considered to be Russia’s backyard. Turkey, with the help of Azerbaijan, wants to develop an alternative route for oil and gas from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, bypassing Russia. This interference in imperialist interests will undoubtedly show itself in some way.

Hungary, another NATO member country and also a member of the EU, expressed its opposition to the EU's sanctions against Russia last year. The Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peter Szijjarto, said:

*“We want peace, not another [sanctions] package. We are a direct neighbour of Ukraine. The impact of the war on us is immediate and severe.” [5]*

One day after the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs' statement, the EU tried to punish Hungary. Therefore, the EU Commission president announced that she would recommend the freezing of payments to Hungary under the EU pandemic recovery fund as well as under regular EU cohesion funds, because of rule of law concerns in Hungary.[6]

Recently, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs has again stated that Hungary will not support any sanctions by the EU that would limit nuclear cooperation between Hungary and Russia. Regarding the new sanctions package planned by the EU against Russia, he said:

*“We will not support any step, no matter how small, that restricts Hungarian-Russian nuclear cooperation...Sanctions have taken the EU to a dead end. Sanctions harm us Europeans more than the Russians. Everyone can see that. This is not a political statement, it's a fact.” [7]*

Historically, the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf region were united by the West and followed by the US. But recently, against the will of America, OPEC+ extended its previous decision not to increase the level of crude oil production, a decision that was tantamount to a rejection of Biden, who had visited the Middle East. This decision by OPEC+ caused more dissatisfaction on the part of the US, which called it a kind of alignment with Russia in the Ukraine war. China, which has become America's economic rival, has taken advantage of the tension in America's relations with countries in the Persian Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia, and wants to increase its influence in the Middle East.

While Saudi-US relations are particularly tense regarding the issue of energy security, Xi Jinping paid a several-days-long visit to Saudi Arabia on 7 December, where he participated in meetings, including the leaked “Summit of the heads of Arab countries and China”. Before his trip, Xi Jinping published an article in Saudi Arabia's *Al-Riyadh* newspaper in order to prepare for his trip and achieve the intended outcomes. In this article, he talked about the strategic view of China and the fact that relations between China and Arab countries go back as far as 2000 years ago and to Chinese and Arab civilizations. Xi Jinping emphasized that the Silk Road made exchange between civilizations possible.

During this meeting, dozens of memorandums and agreements were signed between the parties, the most important of which is the 2030 vision document of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the China Belt and Road Plan (New Silk Road). The important point to note is that in 2022, Saudi Arabia attracted the most Chinese investment in the New Silk Road project globally. In the same year, trade between China and Saudi Arabia grew by about 30% and was several times greater than the trade between China and Iran; on the flip side, Iranian media reported “the Chinese turning away from investing in Iran” [8].

Differences following the imperialist war in Ukraine have even extended to Latin America because of the imperialist interests of the parties involved. Throughout the war in Ukraine, Argentina has been dissatisfied with the sanctions imposed on Russia and has stated that these sanctions will not help to solve the crisis and will negatively impact on Argentina's economy. Because of the sanctions, the volume of trade between Russia and Argentina has decreased by 30%.

During the outbreak of the imperialist war, we announced that although Russia, China and Iran have found a kind of convergence in opposition to America, each of them is pursuing its own imperialist interests, which sometimes conflict with the others' interests. Contrary to the notion that China considers Iran to be its strategic ally, the visit of the Chinese president to Saudi Arabia and the final statement of the joint summit meeting of the leaders of China and six emirates of the Persian Gulf in the capital of Saudi Arabia came as a shock to everyone and confirmed the internationalists' belief that each of the gangsters is pursuing its own imperial interests. The statement highlighted Iran's "nuclear file, ballistic missiles, military drones and support for terrorist groups" as being problematic for the Gulf countries in their relations with Iran. The statement asked the Islamic Republic to refrain from "interfering in the internal affairs of countries", to respect the "principles of good neighbourliness", to observe the "non-proliferation regime" of nuclear weapons and to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The president of China also called for resolution of Iran's disputes with the United Arab Emirates over the three islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. In other words, the Chinese president even questioned the territorial integrity of Iran.

While Saudi Arabia is leading a Western-backed military coalition in the war against Iran-backed Houthis, the Sino-Saudi statement emphasizes that the Houthis must commit to a ceasefire and cooperate with the UN in establishing peace.

Although Russia has close relations with Iran, and Iran has recently helped Russia by sending it drones, imperialist interests in relation to Russia are also evident. Iran has not been able to sell its oil because of the sanctions imposed on Iran. China was formerly one of Iran's oil customers, buying Iran's oil at a special discount. However, following imposition of the Russian sanctions, the sale of Russian oil to China, at a discounted price, has overshadowed the sale of Iranian oil and has limited Iran's income, to the detriment of its economy. In line with its imperialist interests and desire to maintain some kind of relationship with Azerbaijan, Russia has recently arrested five citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including Yusufov, who wanted to form a religious group related to the Quds Force, called the "Azerbaijan Muslim Unity". These individuals were handed over to Azerbaijan on 21 December 2022 [9]. Considering Israel's influence in Azerbaijan, this issue was a hard blow for Iran.

With a green light from the US, Israel has repeatedly carried out large-scale air and missile attacks on Iranian positions in Syria, and Iranian gangsters have remained silent and humiliated. Russia's knowledge of Israel's attacks on Iranian positions in Syria and positions in Syria itself, together with a lack of effort on the part of Russia in terms of preventing these attacks, indicates that Putin would rather pursue Russia's imperialist interests and maintain some kind of balance in its relations with Iran and Israel.

The European Union is trying to take advantage of the current situation (Russia's involvement in the Ukraine war) and expand its influence in Central Asia. In this context, the EU, with the support

of the US, has sent 100 officials to monitor the borders of Armenia for two years. Russia has accused the EU of trying to fuel “geopolitical conflict” in the region and seeking to expand its influence in the region [10].

Although there is a kind of synergy between Russia and China, and some of Russia’s military actions have China’s tacit support, we must not forget that each of them is pursuing its own – sometimes conflicting – imperialist interests. It is in this context that the *Financial Times* has reported that China’s new investments in the Russian section of the New Silk Road have reduced to zero following the imposition of Western sanctions in protest against the Ukraine war [11].

In line with its imperialist interests and a kind of balance of power on the imperialist chessboard, China recently invited President Raisi of Iran to China. On 14 February 2023, Raisi arrived in China for a three-day visit. Previously, Iranian officials had said that Raisi would travel to China to operationalize the 25-year agreement between Iran and China, but it was later announced that 20 cooperation documents were signed during this meeting. Iranian newspapers questioned Raisi’s trip ahead of an apology from China and wrote:

*“Why did the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran visit Beijing before the President of China apologized or corrected Iran’s anti-territorial integrity stance during his visit to Saudi Arabia in December?”* [12]

In the meeting between the presidents of Iran and China, Xi Jinping did not mention the issues raised in the final statement of the joint meeting of the leaders of China and the six emirates of the Gulf region and only emphasized the national sovereignty of Iran, saying:

*“Xi Jinping emphasized that China supports Iran in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national dignity, supports Iran in resisting unilateralism and bullying, opposes external forces interfering in Iran’s internal affairs and undermining its security and stability.”* [13]

China, now the world’s second-largest economy, is projected to become the world’s largest economy by 2030, overtaking the US. While China’s economic growth was initially sluggish, Western countries (led by the US) supported China’s economic growth. But when China emerged as the world’s second-largest economy, tensions took a serious turn. China’s rise as an economic power is directly related to the decline of the US, which is at the centre of the global capitalist crisis. China now presents a serious challenge to the US.

The undeniable fact is that today’s tensions are a foretaste of future imperialist tensions. The main confrontations will be between the US and China. The US wants to contain China, which is a strategic enemy, and its containment strategy began long before Trump. Biden is continuing this policy, wants to create serious problems in order to curtail China’s imperialist progress and thwart its ambitions in the name of the Silk Road. The New Silk Road, with its infrastructure, will allow China to access the ends of the earth and expand its imperialist power everywhere.

In previous decades, mastering oil resources could be a tool for hegemony, but semiconductors and chips are now rivalling the supremacy of oil. Whoever controls this industry has economic power. America has been a key player in computer technology, but its dominance is now being challenged by China, intent on developing modern semiconductor technology (nanometre-sized components)

[14]. The US has banned sales and exports of semi-media production technology, including specialized labour. Modern semiconductors are designed in America and manufactured in Taiwan, South Korea and Japan but assembled in China. Most modern semi-media technology is currently produced in Taiwan, and China alone buys more than 50% of the semi-media manufactured globally. Access to modern semi-media is not only desirable but vital for China's economic growth, and Taiwan plays a vital role for both China and America.

The pursuit of imperialist interests has been clearly visible both on the NATO front and among countries that have somehow converged in opposition to America, and this imperialist interference means that we will witness a new round of imperialist tensions and more chaos across the world. Instability will spread from Europe to the Middle East, and from the Caucasus to Southeast Asia.

In the wake of the war, many countries have increased their war expenses (defence budget) to an unprecedented level. Naturally, increases in military budgets will have a knock-on effect on the living standards of the working class. The working class is – again – paying the price of war, with rampant inflation and falling living standards. Inflation has reached double digits – not in peripheral capitalism but in metropolitan capitalism.

An era of imperialist war is not favourable ground for the flourishing and expansion of proletarian battles, but the capitalist crisis provides ideal conditions for the growth of class consciousness and proletarian battles. The conditions of the working class during the Ukrainian war are not comparable to those of 1914, and the working class was in an even more desperate situation than 1914. However, internationalists have declared, regarding the current situation, that revolutionaries should not wait for a class movement. The activities of revolutionaries will not be carried out in a vacuum and will not be in vain. Most importantly, this imperialist war reminds us of the need to raise the flag of internationalism even if it isolates the revolutionaries from the masses of the working classes. This is one of the doctrines of Lenin and Luxemburg, and this doctrine continues to inspire revolutionaries.

The communist left has proclaimed that peace carnivals and anti-war campaigns in Western and European countries are part of NATO's war propaganda, in line with NATO's imperialist goals. As long as we remain in the grip of capitalism, there will be no peace. The flames of war will continue to be fanned. Only the working class can offer real peace to humanity – through class struggle and by challenging capitalism.

Internationalists declared, in the same joint statement, that proletarian internationalism is a reaction to imperialist war and that the international proletariat is the only force capable of stopping imperialist war. The global working class, for its part, must continue to fight against deteriorating wages and living standards.

Today, we can see the joint statement's predictions of a year ago. We are witnessing massive labour protests and strikes by the working class in defence of living standards across the globe, from Europe to Asia and from Africa to America. In other words, we are currently witnessing a revival of the class struggle the world over. Internationalists declared that the working class is being forced to defend its standard of living, which is likely to involve a confrontation with the imperialist war.

Blood, filth and sludge fall from head to toe of the cruel capitalist system. From within the capitalist peace, only the flames of war will ignite. As long as capitalism continues to go unchallenged, wage

slavery, war, pandemics etc. will be a part of our daily lives. Our interests lie in the class struggle, where the workers come together and fight for common class interests. Instead of being cannon fodder in the gangsters' war, instead of continuing barbarism, instead of adhering to the filthy capitalist system, we must strive towards communist revolution and end the viciousness and wretchedness of capitalism.

## **Long live the war between the classes!**

### **Internationalist Voice**

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#### **Notes:**

[1] [Emmanuel Macron](#)

[2] [Bolton](#)

[3] [Politico](#)

[4] [İbrahim Kalın](#)

[5] [France 24](#)

[6] As source 5

[7] [Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto](#)

[8] [Etemad Online](#)

[9] [Deutsche Welle](#)

[10] [Euronews](#)

[11] [Financial Times](#)

[12] [Donyaeeqtesad](#)

[13] [Embassy of the China](#)

[14] The latest semiconductors are about 3 nanometres in size, compared to a human hair, which is between 50,000 and 100,000 nanometres thick. The smaller their size, the better the quality because more transistors can be inserted.



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