

Who's MAWO?

Mobilization Against War and Occupation is a coalition of over 50 endorsing organizations and also individual members, most of which are working class organizations, student groups, grassroots organizations, and ethnic communities. This is including Indigenous activists and groups from the third world as well as women, youth and elder fighters for social justice and against war and occupation. We are the people in struggle because we are people that suffer at the hands of imperialism. We have the energy, drive and will for change because it is in our interest to make this change in order to create a better world for all of humanity!

Get involved



with MAWO!

Meetings & Forums on Tuesdays - 7:00PM

For location: [@MAWOvan](#) OR Website:

mawovancouver.org

[f](#) Mobilization Against War and Occupation

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UPCOMING EVENT ENDORSED BY MAWO:

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE HOSTED BY
THE UNITED NATIONAL ANTIWAR COALITION

**STOP THE WARS AT HOME & ABROAD:
BUILDING A MOVEMENT
AGAINST WAR, INJUSTICE & REPRESSION!**

**The United National
AntiWar Coalition
UNAC**

Join activists from the many domestic and international struggles as we build unity against the Trump Regime and the underlying system responsible for imperialist wars, poverty, racism, sexism, the oppression of LGBTQ people, attacks on Muslims and undocumented immigrants, environmental destruction and all forms of injustice.

**June 16-18, 2017
GREATER RICHMOND CONVENTION CENTER
403 N. 3rd St., Richmond, VA 23219**

UNACPEACE@GMAIL.COM 518-227-6947
"National Conference: 'Stop the Wars at Home & Abroad!' - UNAC"

**WWW.UNACPEACE.ORG
WWW.UNACCONFERENCE2017.ORG**

**MONTHLY ANTIWAR
RALLY & PETITION DRIVE**

**US/CANADA/NATO
HANDS OFF!**

**SYRIA YEMEN
IRAQ VENEZUELA
NORTH KOREA**

**FRIDAY JUNE 23
5 PM
VANCOUVER ART GALLERY
ROBSON ST. (DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER)**

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stop the war! stop the occupations!

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MAWO 65

newsletter

June 2017

mobilization against war & occupation

U.S. & DEMOCRACY BUILDING FAILURE AFTER FAILURE



By Nita Palmer

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre, the US and their allies launched a 'global war on terror. Alongside this guns-blazing military campaign, though, there was also a softer, more idealistic goal: to "create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community". (Mission statement, US State Department, 2004).

Since then, the US, NATO members, and other allied countries have spent billions not only on their military campaigns but also on programs to build and promote democracy in the countries which they have invaded and occupied. In Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere, old governments have been overthrown by the military might of these imperialist countries, but has this ushered in a new era of democracy? Let's examine the evidence.

Afghanistan

When the United States and NATO invaded and occupied Afghanistan in 2001, building a 'stable and democratic Afghanistan' was identified as one of their main goals in the Bonn Agreement, which set up a new government and state structure in Afghanistan under heavy US and NATO funding and influence.

Before the invasion of Afghanistan, stories emerged in the Western media detailing the villainy of the Taliban, who held power in the country at the time. While the Taliban certainly were not a

warlords even hold ministerial positions in the Western-backed, 'democratic' Afghan parliament. These men are in many cases worse than the Taliban that preceded them, using the legitimacy brought to them by Western support to increase their wealth and further their reign of terror over the Afghan people.

A 2016 report by the Special US Congress' Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) found that, "in many cases, US actions legitimized and empowered a class of strongmen who had conflicted allegiances between their own power networks and the nascent Afghan state. In this way, the US helped to lay a foundation for continued impunity, weak rule of law, and the growth of corruption."

If the US and their allies were truly trying to build democracy in Afghanistan, they have by all accounts failed miserably. However, beyond the failures of these projects, we must also ask one critical question: how is it possible to build democracy in Afghanistan when the country is still occupied by 10,000 US troops and more than 100,000 military contractors? The ultimate power for any and all decisions in Afghanistan lies in the hands of the US and their allies who control these armed forces. It is truly impossible to have any legitimate, democratic government in Afghanistan (or anywhere else) when a foreign government holds the military and economic control in the land.

Iraq

The US and UK invaded Iraq in 2003, promising



beacon of progress and human rights, the situation in Afghanistan has improved little to date.

After a decade and a half of war and at least tens of thousands of lives lost, democracy remains elusive. Elections have been marred by fraud, vote-buying, and low voter turnout. Furthermore, the elected government holds little power or legitimacy outside of Kabul. Much of the country is now run by warlords who use strongmen and militias to enforce their own rule. Some of these

to rid the country of the 'dictator', then-President Saddam Hussein. This goal was indeed achieved. But rather than ushering in a new era of democracy and prosperity, Iraq has over the past fourteen years plunged into chaos, instability, and sectarian violence. By 2016, 22.5% of Iraqis were living in poverty, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Planning. An Iraqi parliamentary committee estimated last year that unemployment might be as high as 40%, with youth unemployment sitting

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Veterans For Peace: No More Troops in Afghanistan

www.veteransforpeace.org

The Trump Administration announced it has given Defense Secretary Jim Mattis the authority to determine troops levels in Afghanistan. It is widely believed that Mattis favors sending several thousand more U.S. troops to Afghanistan. Why? Perhaps to break the “stalemate” as described by the Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, Army General John Nicholson when describing the war to the Senate Armed Services Committee. In his June 13th testimony, Secretary Mattis told the same committee, “We are not winning in Afghanistan right now.” Veterans For Peace calls for a different direction than more war. We call on Congress to stop funding war and demand a plan for a peaceful solution. We call on the President to immediately begin withdrawal of U.S. troops and take a new direction towards diplomacy and peace. And we call on the people of the U.S. to resist war and demand policies that foster peace and prosperity at home and in Afghanistan. It should be clear after 16 years and the death of tens of thousands of people that no one is a winner in Afghanistan. There is no clear concept of what it means to win there. In fact, it is no longer clear why the U.S. continues to keep troops in Afghanistan and now is on the brink of increasing the number of men and women in harm’s way. The U.S. has claimed to be at war in Afghanistan to deny “terrorists” training and staging areas to attack the United States and to protect the people of Afghanistan. After this long period of war, what does the U.S. have to show for its military efforts? Since the horror of September 11, 2001, the U.S. has been on a path of war, wreaking



havoc on millions of people around the globe. Because of displacement, death and maiming of loved ones by U.S. wars, animosity towards the U.S. has increased and the world has become less safe. The animosity caused by the wars has created a larger pool of people willing to fight the U.S. In 2001 al Qaeda had limited influence and ISIL did not exist. Now Al Qaeda and ISIL have affiliated groups and sympathetic supporters around the globe. The protection of the Afghan people has been a total failure. It has been widely reported that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan found that there were 11,418 civilian casualties (3,498 deaths and 7,920 injured) between January and December 2016, an overall increase of 3 percent. An appalling number of those casualties were children – 923 deaths, and 2,589 injured – a 24 percent increase over record-high numbers from 2015. In addition, 3,535 coalition forces have died; three of which were recently killed as a result of an insider attack fire from an Afghan soldier. We must add to these losses all the people who are physically and psychologically broken and families torn apart. The human cost is immeasurable. But there is also a dollar cost to war. The U.S. has spent over \$1 trillion in this failed and depraved effort in Afghanistan. These dollars represent lost opportunities to repair U.S. infrastructure, pay for healthcare, create jobs and address a host of human needs. It is not too late for a different direction. War was always the wrong option. Perhaps it was not clear 16 years ago. It should be clear now more than ever!

MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION -MAWO April 6, 2017 Vancouver, Canada

Hands Off Syria!

**Resist Imperialist War Mongering!
Oppose and Condemn US Missile Attack
Against Syria!
Organize Against New US Direct War Drive
in Syria!
US Stop Bombing Syria Now!
US Hands Off Syria!**

Once again, the blood thirsty war machine of the US has begun to destroy, kill and shed the blood of innocent people, continuing their destruction of humanity through the new era of war and occupation which started by imposing war and occupation on Afghanistan in 2001.

On Thursday April 6 2017, US warships in the Mediterranean Sea sent more than 60 cruise missiles to Syria to punish the Syrian government for allegedly using chemical bombs against their own civilians. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) strongly condemns this brutal and criminal attack on Syria and demands US immediately stop bombing Syria and get all US troops out of Syria.

The US, by attacking militarily and unilaterally a sovereign nation, Syria, which is a nation state member of the UN, committed not only a criminal act, but as well has undermined all international laws established by the UN and the Geneva Convention. Therefore, the US itself is subject to a criminal conduct investigation for committing crimes against humanity.

This attack was not decided just recently. Rather, the US government, since the presidency of Barack Obama, has been waiting for an excuse and a bogus claim to attack Syria, because ISIS and all other terrorist groups are losing on the ground. In fact, this limited and ineffective attack by the US is really meant to slow down the Syrian government’s progress in the war against terrorists, as well as to help ISIS and other terrorist groups to gain a position against Syrian government.

It is very obvious that the US and ISIS have emerged as one unit against the legitimate and elected government of President Bashar Assad. This criminal and ugly united front of the US and Daesh/ISIS must be exposed and condemned.

All observations and the course of the events are a clear indication that the US claim that President Bashar Assad’s government used chemical weapons against Syrian people in the city of Idlib is phony and bogus:

- 1- The Syrian government has no chemical weapons. Syria completed the elimination of all chemical weapons material and equipment in the first half of 2014, under an agreement that was ratified and observed by Russia, US, EU and the UN, and is still monitored by International organizations.
- 2- On April 5, 2017, one day before US cruise missile attack against Syria, at the UN Security Council, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Mr. Kim Won-Soo, clearly stated, “However, the means of delivery of the alleged attack cannot be definitely confirmed at this stage.”
- 3- One must think, why would the US in the middle of a UN investigation about this incident and the complete denial by the Syrian government of this act, rush to launch a cruise missile attack against Syria? Why would they do this when all indications from political and military facts are that the Syrian government has not committed this crime? It is obvious that US government is afraid that the result would be against the their own claim.

We call upon all progressive, antiwar and human loving organizations and individuals to step forward and unite to resist and fight back against this new bloody and criminal war drive by US government and their puppet allies.

**Syrian People Will Win!
All US troops Out of Syria!
Stop Bombing, Sabotage and Sanctions
Against Syria!**

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around 60%.

Poverty, instability, and sectarianism have now given rise to ISIS/Daesh, a brutal group of Islamist extremists who are certainly no friends to democracy. What democracy is there for the millions of Iraqis who have been forced to live under the terror of Daesh, faced with the prospect of rape, torture, murder, or worse for daring to oppose the terrorists?

Libya

The stark contrast between the Libya of today and the Libya of less than a decade ago is one of the most appalling examples of how imperialism has failed democracy. In 2011, NATO set its sights on removing Libyan President Muhammar Gaddafi, labelling him a brutal dictator and once again claiming that his removal would bring democracy to the country.

Prior to NATO’s intervention, Libya had risen from poverty to become the wealthiest nation in Africa. Life expectancy was the highest on the continent, and there were fewer people living below the poverty line than in Canada, the US, or most of Europe (CIA World Factbook, 2008).

The 2017 CIA World Factbook gives a grim depiction of the country today: “Libya’s economic transition away from [Gadafi’s] notionally socialist model has completely stalled as political chaos persists and security continues to deteriorate... Living conditions, including access to clean drinking water, medical services, and safe housing, have all declined as the civil war has caused more people to become internally displaced, further straining local resources... Extremists affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) attacked Libyan oilfields in the first half of 2015; ISIL has a presence in many cities across Libya...”

According to the 2017 Factbook, a third of Libyans now live in poverty.

Once the wealthiest and most developed country in Africa, Libya is now ruled by ISIS/Daesh and a variety of gangs, many with ties to al-Qaeda. The NATO-installed ‘democratic government’ has virtually no power in most of the country. One of the few new booming industries in Libya is the slave trade. Migrants from West Africa en route to Europe are being captured and sold at slave markets.

This is the ‘democracy’ imperialist countries have built in Libya.

Syria

Before the US and their allies began bombing and sending troops to Syria, we heard the same refrain yet again: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was a ‘dictator’ and a ‘murderer’, hell-bent on quashing any opposition to his government. After a sudden armed uprising against his government, imperialist countries and their allies such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia banded together to arm, train, fund, and lend legitimacy to these ‘rebels’. Soon, though, these so-called ‘moderates’ dropped their masks and showed their true colours as extremist terrorist groups - the most prominent of which today are ISIS/Daesh and al-Nusra Front.

The Syrian government has spent the past six years battling these terrorists for control of the country. Despite all obstacles, Syria held elections in 2012. Syrians once again elected Bashar al-Assad to the presidency with an 88% majority for his party and a voter turnout of 73%. Yet the US and their allies continue to call for the removal of Assad and want to place control of the country in the hands of these terrorist groups!

Yemen

For the past two years, the Yemeni people have been living under the terror of a brutal bombing campaign by Saudi Arabia, with financial, logistical, and intelligence support from the US.

In Syria, the US armed, trained, and funded small groups of so-called anti-government rebels. Yet when a mass movement for justice and democracy began in Yemen in 2011, the US stayed silent. Protests continued after absolutely illegitimate elections were held to confirm a new president

(there was only one candidate, Mansur Hadi, supported by Saudi Arabia). After Hadi’s term ended and he fled the country in 2015, Saudi Arabia began bombing Yemen under the pretext of bringing back ‘stability’ and ‘democracy’ to Yemen (restoring Hadi to power).

Nearly 13,000 people have been killed in the bombing campaign, and more are dying every day. Seventeen million people are on the verge of famine, according to the UN, and Saudi Arabia has frequently prevented the delivery of aid.

Saudi Arabia is carrying out the dirty work of the US with this war. But how will bombing and starving people bring democracy? The Yemeni people are being punished simply for daring to call for a government which would represent their interests and stand up to the US and Saudi Arabia.

Imperialism: Incompatible with Democracy

All available evidence points to a complete and utter failure by imperialist countries to bring any sort of democracy to those countries which they have invaded and occupied.

But we must ask: was ‘building democracy’ truly the goal in the first place? While Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya and Yemen have been attacked for their lack of democracy, the US and Canadian governments have no qualms about allying themselves closely with Saudi Arabia - a country which has never held national elections and is ruled by a ruthless monarchy with an atrocious record on human rights and women’s rights.

The problem imperialist countries had with the governments of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Syria was not a lack of democracy, but the fact that they had not surrendered control of their countries to the political, military, and economic interests of the US and their allies.

It seems ‘building democracy’ is in fact nothing more than a euphemism for ‘regime change’. The ‘war on terror’ is nothing more than a justification for this new era of war and occupation in which imperialist countries are attempting to take back control of independent nations which have dared to claim control over their own resources, their own foreign policy, and their own future. As the capitalism faces a falling average rate of profit and ever more frequent and severe economic crises, imperialist countries are racing to take control of global markets and resources ahead of rising strong competitors such as Russia and China. In this mad race, it is the people of the world who are paying the ultimate price. In this new era of war and occupation, imperialist countries have razed cities ancient and modern, killed and maimed millions, and made tens of millions more homeless. These wars bring many consequences, but democracy surely isn’t one of them.

True Democracy: Self-Determination for Oppressed Nations

Every oppressed nation must be granted the right to self-determination – to choose its own government and its own foreign policy without influence or meddling from foreign powers. This is a fundamental part of democracy – yet this is exactly what the US and other imperialist countries have been trying to do away with in the countries they have invaded.

True democracy cannot be brought to a country at gunpoint, or through a war which deprives people of their most basic rights of food, shelter, and security. True democracy cannot exist when the only candidates in an election are those vetted by a foreign power. True democracy cannot exist under war and occupation, when the ultimate power for any decision lies with the occupying forces.

Democracy must come from within the country itself – not be imposed from the outside. Yes, this democracy is sometimes imperfect. The governments that arise from this system are not always supported by all. But this is the nature of democracy, and it is up to the people to change their government if it is not working for them. It is neither the right nor the responsibility of imperialist countries to intervene.

