



WAKE UP!! YER EMPIRE'S TOTTERING...

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BI-POLAR DISORDER

As the G8 prepare to meet this week in Russia amid acrimony, with the topic of energy and who controls it high on the agenda, SchNEWS looks at the new global bi-polar disorder...

Just five years ago it looked as if the march of western corporations was unstoppable. Under the auspices of the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF, World Bank etc), backed by the threat of military intervention by the world's only superpower, western capitalists were setting the agenda in no uncertain terms. Theorists concurred that US power would define the 21st century. On the right Francis Fukuyama foretold "The End of History" while on the left Negri nodded knowingly with "Empire".

Like a school playground where the resident bully has just lost a fight, the world geo-political scene is in ferment. The Jenga tower of US imperialism has not fallen but it is tottering and other hands now reach for the pieces. The neo-cons must be considering renaming the Project for a New American Century the Project for a New American Decade (or maybe the New American one night stand).

Dick Cheney set the agenda for the new world order back in the 90s, saying, "Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defence strategy and requires that we endeavour to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power."

The ensuing neo-conservative global assault did not just include the attacks on Iraq and Afghanistan but saw an attempt to push US power into the backyards of both Russia and China. The 'lily pad' doctrine has seen US airbases built across the hydrocarbon rich regions of Central Asia. US-sponsored "Orange" revolutions have taken place in Georgia and the Ukraine, in what amounted to a public happy-slapping of Putin by Bush. The Ukraine has the only warm-water port for Russia's black sea fleet. NATO under US guidance has expanded relentlessly into the Baltic - in 2004, 7 more countries: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined NATO. Another area of contention is the Caucasus. The US having successfully brought Georgia into its camp is focusing on other small nations in the region. Control of oil in this region, and the pipelines going through it, is of vital importance to

the US. Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, having substantial reserves of oil, are going to be flash points. Kazakhstan is particularly important since it borders both China and Russia and is the main launching pad for nearly all of the Russian space vehicles.

Pride comes before a fall - How can the rulers of a country with a mere 260 million population (no matter how well resourced) really hope to achieve that kind of global domination? We know all about the G8, the WTO and the IMF (see most of SchNEWS 1999-2002) but although these institutions still hold power, they are gradually being diminished as forums for the simple bulldozing through of US-led corporate imperialism. The US is increasingly demonstrating its inability to project global power with boots on the ground. Alarmed by Uncle Sam's swagger and the robber-baron excesses of the G8 economies, the rest of the world has begun discreetly ganging up. The so-called G21 group of countries (headed up by India and Brazil) wrought havoc on the G8's plans at the last round of WTO talks. The G8 itself is riven by splits and NATO was unwilling to follow the US into the Iraq war.

SHANGHAI NOON

The possibility of a major power-bloc stand off is developing as the China-Russia axis is strengthened. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which held its fifth annual meeting in June, developed from the so-called Shanghai Five (no, really!) Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This grouping was created in 1996, allegedly to address the "three evils" of terrorism, separatism (all these countries are threatened with internal break up mostly from Islamic separatists) and narcotics. In 2001 the group

TITNORE OPEN DAY

Titnore Woods protest camp in the woods west of Worthing, Sussex is having an open day this Saturday, July 15th, from 12 noon. Featuring workshops on bender making, camp cookery and other practical skills, as well as a talk on anarchism, the philosophical basis of the direct action movement. The tree camp - into it's seventh week - was set up to halt the proposed 875-home estate, road widening and associated Tesco supermarket (See SchNEWS 547).

* **For directions to the camp**
see www.protectourwoodland.co.uk
or www.eco-action.org/porkbolter

Smash EDO Demo

Horror Of War Demo next Wednesday - with creative ways of showing bomb component manufacturers EDO MBM the true horror of war. July 19th, 4-6pm, Outside EDO-MBM, Home Farm Road, Brighton.

* Also every Wednesday 4-6pm there are regular **Noise Demonstrations**

* For more info see www.smashedo.org.uk

admitted Uzbekistan and signed the Declaration of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In the same year Russia and China signed the Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation (which probably tells you all you need to know about the mutual suspicion this project was born in). In 2004 Mongolia was admitted as an observer and in 2005 Iran, India and Pakistan received their observer status. Last year also saw joint Russia/China military manoeuvres. The US has been outright refused observer or member status.

SCO could evolve from a regional economic and security pact into something else. If the observer states were to actually join the SCO, it would be one of the most powerful organisations in the world. Russia and Iran combined would have more energy reserves and production capacity than any other nations on Earth. It would represent over 2 billion people. Economically it would have the energy resources of Russia, Iran and caucuses plus the manufacturing might of the Chinese and burgeoning economy of India. With the Russian space/military industrial complex it would be a formidable world power. SCO represents the coming together many of the world's resource rich nations with China, which seems to have an insatiable appetite for more oil and gas to feed its rapidly expanding economy. It is conceivable that at some future date, Russia and Kazakhstan might choose, either for strategic or economic reasons, to export the bulk of their oil and gas eastward to China, rather than westward to Europe. This is not a foregone conclusion by any means and the US is doing everything in its power (such as signing new nuclear technology deals with India) to break up the alliance.

However the growth of this new power nexus has already seen the Stars and Stripes snubbed more than once. Uzbekistan's dictator recently gave US troops their marching orders while Kyrgyzstan took the opportunity to put the rent on their bases up a hundredfold! Even Israel, the US's primary client state, has begun cosyng up to China

continued overleaf...

with \$3bn annual trade, joint agricultural projects and, most significantly, advanced military technology of US origin. The whole Caucasus is being dragged through a hegemony backwards, playing both sides against one another in classic Cold War style.

The crisis over Iran's attempts to develop nuclear power and North Korea's letting off of fireworks at the back of the classroom point to a potentially dramatic shift in global politics. Put simply, as both Russia and China are likely to veto any Security Council sanctions against Iran over the nuclear issue, this leaves the US with the option of going it alone with military action or doing nothing. Superpower bloc relations are a game of stud poker, with some cards clearly exposed and others only bluffed or hinted at. While the G8 may be obviously showing a strong hand on the table, it may be the countries of SCO – with their rich share of energy resources, massive supply of cheap labour, undeveloped resources, minimal civil liberties and firm state control – are the ones holding the pocket aces as time for the big showdown gets nearer.

Of course, ultimately whether these power games get resolved as a third world war, a peaceful slide into a new world order or a new cold war of multiple superpowers, any of these outcomes completely fail to deal with the biggies facing the state of human civilisations on earth – climate change and peak oil and other resource scarcity. With countries like China, India and Russia set to make current energy and resource demands look tame, not only will this help put climate change catastrophes into a j-curve, but as resources – particularly oil – get scarce, there will be increasingly desperate grabs for supplies as the 'resource wars' hot up.

As the ancient Chinese curse has it "May you live in interesting times."

PARTY & PROTEST

JULY: 15 - International Protest Day for the end of **Guantánamo Bay**. With protests happening all over the world, there will be a demonstration in London, at Marble Arch at 12pm, going onto the US Embassy at Grosvenor Sq. For more see www.cageprisoners.com ** **Justice For Omar Deghayes** - a resident of Brighton of Libyan descent who has been in Guantánamo Bay for three years. A group from Brighton will be joining the protest at Marble Arch, London, 12pm (see entry above). Contact Jackie 07796 478 421 web www.save-omar.org.uk ** **15 - "Latin America: Social movements fight back"** Radical Activist Network conference, supported by War on Want, featuring Oscar Olivera, the spokesperson for the Coalition in Defence of Water and Life, Bolivia and many more, also workshops and sessions, 1pm to 7pm, University of London Union, 3rd floor, Malet Street, London WC1, £2/donation see www.radicalactivist.net/latinamerica. ** **21 - International Protest Camp in Iceland**. A series of gigantic dams is already under construction at Kárahnjúkar in the eastern highlands of Iceland, designated solely to generate energy for one massive ALCOA aluminium smelter to be built by war-profiteers Bechtel in the beautiful fjord of Reydarfjörður. This will not generate power for domestic use, and the natural habitat of many rare and endangered plants and animals will be destroyed. It is still not too late! Join the protest gathering in Iceland – for more see www.savingiceland.org ** **Come to the monthly Unity protest** outside the Home Office Immigration Centre, Brand Street, Glasgow in solidarity with refugee families who are forced to report there. Unity are a new union of asylum seekers fighting for greater rights. Contact: The UNITY Centre, 30 Ibrox Street, Glasgow, G51 1AQ. Tel: 0141 427 7992 theunitycentre@btconnect.com

SchNEWS In Brief

A No-Borders camp is happening in Gorizia, north-east Italy on the Slovenian border from 19th-23rd July. Camping will be near the Clandestino Social Centre and the week-long event will focus on a nearby Detention Centre. For more see www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2006/07/344585.html

** Two people were arrested outside the gates of Downing Street on Sunday under the much-abused **Serious Organised Crime Act (SOCPA)** - see SchNEWS 515). They were holding up placards, which now makes them Serious Organised Criminals in the Mets funny little world. Last month, one of the pair was similarly nicked for having a placard with a quote from George Orwell on it. For more on SOCPA and its implications, see www.parliamentprotest.org.uk ** **Block the Builders** were up early on Tuesday, dancing and singing on the roads leading into the new Orion laser facility at the Aldermaston Weapons Establishment in Berkshire. Cops put a section 14 in place, banning any protest, but after the main entrance was blockaded for up to one hour, ten were arrested. See www.blockthebuilders.org.uk

CZAR TREKKERS

As the G8 Summit starts in St Petersburg, the authorities have already begun stamping down on the protests, and doing all it can to stop the influx of national and international trouble makers (for background see SchNEWS 549).

In the build up to the Summit there have already been over 200 arrests, as well as house searches, checks and searches on the street, and more across Russia. Two Russian anarchists have been sentenced to ten days detention for "endangering public order and safety" - for purchasing gas masks and carrying G8 flyers in their pockets. Last Sunday three were arrested from a flat - with two Germans later being given ten day detention for 'urinating in public', while the third, a Siberian, was arrested in his underpants. He was not given clothes during his arrest and ended up being taken to hospital due to circulation problems - his is yet to be sentenced. The flat was searched and three more arrested in connection to it.

This Monday, the Legal Team in Moscow was searched by FSB (Russian intelligence service), who entered the building by introducing themselves as neighbours claiming that the flat below was flooding. In Samara, seven activists had their flats raided with computers and paper confiscated, apparently related to an anti-militarism action in Samara on February 23rd - and all those involved have court summonses on July 14th - a day of protest. Also on Monday six travelling from Omsk to St Petersburg were taken off the train accused of carrying 'dangerous objects' - and have been out of contact since. On Tuesday seven were arrested and face 15 days of arrest for a demo in St Petersburg against the import of nuclear waste. The list goes on.

The Russian Social Forum - the usual-style liberal summit-protest umbrella group - were planning a mass demonstration on the Friday, which has been banned, as are all other protests. Reports are the city centre of St Petersburg is crawling with cops in the build-up, but despite this, many are undaunted by the scare stories and will be out on the street when the flotillas of military helicopters drop off the G8 puppet leaders and entourages of yes-men this weekend.

* Not many groups from the UK have made it over there - apart from the up-for-it Gwent Anarchists who have a blog - see www.welshanarchosinrussia.blogspot.com

* Don't be surprised if the news of protests gets silenced or black-listed - look at these other information sources to find out what's really going on... <http://int.ru.indymedia.org> or <http://g8-2006.plentyfact.net>

BACKS TO THE WALL

As Israel fights a war on two fronts in Gaza and Lebanon, peaceful resistance to the occupation conducted by Palestinians, Israelis and internationals continues...

On July 6th, three families from the village of Bil'in moved into empty apartments built on land the village owns in the Matityahu East settlement, west of Israel's apartheid barrier in the West Bank. The Israeli military has declared the whole area a closed military zone until the 8th of July. The families intend to actually live in the apartments, and more are set to follow. This will make a statement about their rights to the land and act as a direct, non-violent challenge to the apartheid of the Israeli state. Matityahu East was built illegally on land belonging to the Palestinian village of Bil'in.

This bold move by Bil'in villagers has put the state of Israel to a test. The Police and Military have done nothing to stop Jewish settlers creating facts on the ground in defiance of the Israeli Supreme Court. Yet when Palestinian villagers, legally taking up residence on their own land try to move in, they use military orders in an attempt to prevent them.

The apartheid barrier under construction runs through Bil'in, and separates the village from substantial parts of its land, including the portion on which Matityahu East was built. Although in public Israel claims that the route of the wall there is purely for security reasons, the route accommodates planned future expansion of the settlement, exactly following the settlement master-plan.

Izbet Tabib is a small village of 300 inhabitants near Qalqiliya. The residents of the village are all recognized as refugees (by UNRWA) but the village is not recognized as a refugee camp. In fact, it is not recognized at all by the Israeli government which has issued demolition orders for most of the buildings in the village. This small village has been assaulted by the Israeli occupation in ways which would have destroyed much larger communities. Much of its lands were taken by the wall, basic infrastructure such as a connection to the electric grid and permanent roofs for buildings is denied and most recently, the main exit from the village was blocked by an earth mound.

The mere existence of Izbet Tabib is a continuing act of resistance in the form of Tsumud. The village is now calling on Israelis to join it on Saturday July 15th to demonstrate against the wall and the closure of the road and to continue the construction of the village's kindergarten in defiance of the building restrictions.

For more info on action against the occupation see www.electronicintifada.net ** www.palsolidarity.org ** www.squat.net/antiwall

...and finally...

Who said SUV drivers are all tossers, driving tanks which do ten miles-per-gallon for personal transport and to hell with the planet? For one Eddie Griffin in Minneapolis, merely driving a Cadillac Escalade SUV with a DVD player mounted on the dashboard didn't make him enough of a jerk-off.

Recently he had his come-uppance during a wobbly night drunk behind the wheel, when he crashed his SUV. But, because Eddie was so virile and could hold his drink, it wasn't the booze that caused the crash... Witnesses claim that at the time of the accident, he was driving while masturbating to pornography playing on the DVD. They say that men can't multi-task.

We hear that as a safety precaution Cadillac is going to start replacing drivers side air-bags with blow-up dolls for such emergencies.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers... Confucius says "He who will not economise will have to agonise". Honest!

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