

PER
320.5323
ST 8 C

STRUGGLE

published by the
COMMITTEE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY IN AUSTRALIA
GPO BOX 474D, MELBOURNE VIC 3001

"Marxism consists of thousands of truths, but they all boil down to the one sentence, *'It is right to rebel!'* For thousands of years, it had been said that it was right to oppress, it was right to exploit, and it was wrong to rebel. This old verdict was only reversed with the appearance of Marxism. This is a great contribution. It was through struggle that the proletariat learned this truth, and Marx drew the conclusion. *And from this truth there follows resistance, struggle, the fight for socialism.*"

- Mao Tsetung

ISSUE # 19



NO: 19
JAN...FEBRUARY 2000
SUPPLEMENT TO STRUGGLE..



Apply M-L-M,
principally Maoism!

PIPELINE OF GREED

U.S. Imperialism and the "Great Game" for Caspian Oil

"A Cocktail of Oil and Politics—U.S. Seeks to End Russian Domination of the Caspian"
New York Times headline,
November 20, 1999

"It is not just another oil and gas deal, and this is not just another pipeline. It is a strategic framework that advances America's national security interests. It is a strategic vision for the future of the Caspian region."

Bill Richardson, U.S. Energy Secretary, November 18, 1999

*"Steal an apple, they call you a thief.
Steal a country, they call you an emperor."*

old saying

"Note to schoolteachers: Find the Caspian on the map, draw a circle around it, and show it to the children. Twenty years from now, or perhaps even 10, some of them may find themselves deployed there."

Paul Starobin, "The New Great Game," National Journal, Washington magazine for U.S. policymakers

On November 18, 1999 President Clinton was in Istanbul, Turkey—as four countries signed a major new "intergovernmental declaration of intent." The grins on imperialist faces showed that this was a major step in U.S. plans to seize the oil fields of the Caspian Sea.

After years of U.S. pressure, intrigue and bribery, the regimes of Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan agreed to build a major new 1,200-mile pipeline from the Caspian Sea oil center of Baku to the ship-loading oil terminals of Ceyhan in southern Turkey. If this pipeline project goes ahead, oil that was once the most valuable resource of the former Soviet empire will reach the world through facilities controlled by U.S. imperialism and its allies.

In the 1992 Gulf War, the U.S. tightened its control over Persian Gulf oil. Now the U.S. is determined that any major new oil fields being opened to the world market will also be controlled by the U.S.

The U.S. is not interested in Caspian oil to supply its own internal industry. The U.S. is grabbing for control of the Caspian oil fields because other countries need this oil—and because the U.S. wants to control them. Other imperialist rivals—including Germany and Japan—are "energy poor" and need access to oilfields outside their borders. Most Third World countries are heavily dependent on imported oil.

Opening the Caspian Sea oil up, under U.S. control, will also give the U.S. more power over the Persian Gulf and Arab states in world affairs. It will have more power to play oil-producing countries off against each other.

In addition, by depriving Russia of control over these oil fields, the U.S. would be delivering a major blow to plans of the Russian ruling class—to re-emerge as a world class imperialist power. Cheap Caspian oil was crucial for operating the military bloc that the Soviet ruling class built after restoring capitalism in 1956. Losing that strategic oil would threaten today's Russian imperialists with a permanent demotion—one they will not tolerate without a fight.

The intense bombing of Chechen villages is only one of several operations being carried out by Russian imperialism to keep its hand in the Caspian region.

The U.S. move into the Caspian is a power move that threatens and provokes other big powers. And at the same time, it is a sinister threat to the masses of people throughout the world.

This is a power grab by an oppressor who is determined to enthrone itself as the "single global superpower" well into the next century. It is an imperialist move to control the lives, resources, labor and future of hundreds of millions of people.

The signing of the intergovernmental agreement on the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline (left) and the Energy Secretary Richardson (far right).
Presidents of four Caspian region countries are overseen by Bill Clinton (left) from the Energy



THE NEW "GREAT GAME" FOR CENTRAL ASIA

"The U.S. strategy toward Russia is aimed at weakening its international position and ousting it from strategically important regions of the world, above all, the Caspian region, the Transcaucasus and Central Asia."

Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev

The Caspian Sea contains two huge sets of oil fields. One stretches underwater—east of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. The other is the Tengiz oilfields—far away on the Caspian's northwest shore in the country of Kazakhstan. In addition there are massive amounts of natural gas scattered throughout the Caspian region.

The *known* reserves of Kazakhstan alone are larger than the oilfields of Nigeria or Libya—but the unexplored oil may be as much as five times larger—putting Caspian oil fields in the same league as the fields of Iran or Kuwait.

With the success of the Russian revolution of 1917, the oil-producing countries of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan became republics within the Soviet Union. The oil pipelines there all ran *north*—into Russia. From 1917 to 1956, this oil was a key resource for the creation of the world's first socialist economy. During World War 2, Hitler tried to seize the oil of Baku—and during this adventure his armies received their decisive defeat in Stalingrad. After capitalist forces seized power in the Soviet Union in 1956, the Caspian oil became a glue holding together their empire and social-imperialist war alliance.

After 1989, the Soviet Union collapsed and its central Russian republic slipped into economic crisis, political turmoil and military disarray. The former Soviet republics of the Caspian region declared independence. The oil and natural gas of the Caspian came "up for grabs." U.S. imperialism had long been plotting to carve off the Soviet Union's whole Central Asian tier of non-Russian republics, *and their oil reserves*. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the U.S. imperialists went into full gear.

The British imperialist-poet Rudyard Kipling talked of the "Great Game"—the intense struggle during the late 1800s between Russian imperialism and British imperialism to control the resources and people of Central Asia—from Afghanistan to Turkey. After 1989, imperialist planners everywhere started talking about "the new Great Game."

Like arrogant conquerors, a consortium of 11 major oil corporations set up outposts on Caspian shores. Atlantic Richfield, Chevron, Exxon, Mobil, Pennzoil, Phillips Petroleum, Texaco, and especially the new Anglo-American "powerhouse" BP Amoco spent billions of dollars buying up Soviet-era oil companies and drilling rights. The Clinton White House set up a high-level "interdepartmental work group"—run by the National Security Council—to oversee the larger geo-political U.S. takeover of the Caspian Sea.

The intrigue that followed has been done with very little public awareness in the U.S. These are operations worked out *within* the U.S. ruling class. U.S. imperialism made its moves using oil companies, semi-secret delegations, military connections and all kinds of funding of pro-western media. For ten years now, high-level networks of U.S.

agents have been expanded, trained and activated throughout the countries of Central Asia.

PIPELINE, PIPELINE, WHO RUNS THE PIPELINE?

"The game's called pipeline poker. The Caspian is crazy. It's landlocked. We can drill all the oil you'd ever need. But can we get it out?"

Texas oilman in Baku's "Ragin' Cajun" bar
"We cannot help seeing the uproar stirred up in some western countries over the energy resources of the Caspian. Some seek to exclude Russia from the game and undermine its interests. The so-called 'pipeline war' in the region is part of this game."

Russian President Boris Yeltsin, 1998

The oil corporations are spending billions—producing oil rigs and hiring large numbers of people to extract oil from the Caspian Sea. But, when the millions of barrels start flowing out of the Caspian, how will they reach the world market?

The Caspian Sea is landlocked, and far from any of the world industrial centers. This oil must be transported out of the region *by pipeline*—through politically explosive and contested areas. Whoever controls the pipes ultimately controls the oil.

Russia proposed to build a new *northern* pipeline parallel to the old pipeline from Baku to Novorossisk—and to expand companion pipelines from Tengiz to Novorossisk.

Iran proposed a *southern* pipeline over its territory—from Baku to the Iranian oil terminal on Kharg Island. This route would make the Caspian Sea into a hinterland of the Persian Gulf—and would secure the position of Iran and other Persian Gulf countries in the center of the world oil economy.

Some oil companies supported this Iranian plan because the Iranian route was estimated to be the cheapest. They also argued that this pipeline would give them more power *within* Iran—strengthening imperialist control over that important country.

The U.S.—and specifically the Clinton White House—was determined to oppose *any* "north/south" pipelines. The White House adopted a plan, cooked up by long-time ruling class strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski, to create an "east-west" pipe which would bypass *both* Russia and Iran.

The U.S. intends to *strip* Russia of control over this oil. And the U.S. wants the Caspian oilfields to be completely independent of the Persian Gulf—to diminish the importance of Persian Gulf states in the world economy.

The U.S.-proposed pipeline would start in Baku—traveling west through Azerbaijan. It would deliberately take a detour around Armenia—a country allied with Russia. The pipeline would circle into Georgia, and then travel southwest across Turkey. Most of its length would be through the Kurdish areas of Turkey—where there has been ongoing armed struggle against the Turkish oppression of Kurds. And the pipeline would end in a port near Ceyhan on the eastern Mediterranean.

U.S. planners propose a second pipeline—for natural gas—traveling over 1,000 miles from Turkmenistan to the Turkish city of Erzurum.

NORTHSTAR COALFIELDS
7-2-2000

LET'S BE CLEAR!

Chechens, majority of them during World War Two were all deported to a new territory since they were in their absolute majority helping German troops and killing Red Army soldiers and airmen who were liberating the territory from German Fascism. This was a very necessary move by the Soviet State and it was meant to resettle all these people, whom otherwise would have suffered annihilation if they were all left in the war zone and would have resulted in heavy casualties by the Red Army, who had to defend themselves daily, both from all the Germans and the Chechens, who were led by their nationalistic leaders.

During this resettlement of thousands of Chechen population, there were only 13 deaths, mainly from illnesses, not the thousands as reported by the German SS propaganda or the US lies today.

Please...don't confuse Communism with Russian nationalism!

Joe Corlett, USA

TURKEY: REGIONAL AGENT FOR IMPERIALIST OPERATIONS

Turkey was put center stage by this U.S. plan in two ways: First, Caspian oil would be passing through Turkish territory. Second, in the maneuvering to develop the Ceyhan pipeline, Turkey's government and military has been assigned the task of infiltrating and politically influencing Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan—the "Newly Independent States" (NIS) that will be producing the oil.

Turkey was chosen for this because it is considered a "reliable ally" of the U.S. and Germany—it is firmly dominated by U.S. and German imperialism and overseen by a fascist military that operates within NATO. In addition, the majority population of Turkey is closely related—by language and culture—to the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, including the peoples of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

For five years, the U.S. has pressured the Caspian regional governments to endorse the Baku-to-Ceyhan route and has pressured the international oil monopolies to finance it. Meanwhile, it has renewed its support for the Turkish government's

military and political campaign to suppress the Kurdish people—whose lands in Turkey are designated as the route for the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.

One of the main reasons that the U.S. attacked Serbia last year was to prevent Turkey from being drawn into the Balkan wars. When Yugoslavia first started to fall apart in the early 1990s, U.S. Secretary of State Baker said, "We don't have a dog in that fight"—meaning that there were no U.S. interests tied up in the fighting between Serbia and Croatia. But Turkey has close ties with Albania—and when the Balkan fighting spread southward into Kosovo, the U.S. got involved—to guarantee that Turkey would not get drawn into a larger war with its neighbors, Greece and Bulgaria. The U.S. wanted Turkey to focus on its assigned task: pacifying Turkish Kurdistan and infiltrating former Soviet Central Asia. [See "U.S. Predators Stalk the Balkans: The imperialist motives behind the NATO war on Yugoslavia," *RW* #1002, April 18, 1999, *RW* Online: www.mcs.net/~rwor]

KA-CHING, KA-CHING

"For the oil companies, the chosen route

must be profitable. But for the Clinton administration, the prime concern has been strategic."

New York Times, November 21, 1999

From the beginning, the major oil monopolies of the world had deep misgivings about the White House plan for a Baku-Ceyhan pipeline—which, on paper at least, they were expected to finance.

They were concerned that the Baku-Ceyhan route was the most expensive route proposed—possibly exceeding \$4 billion, almost twice the estimated cost of the Baku-to-Kharg route, proposed by Iran.

The oil companies were also concerned that the volume of oil passing through the Baku-Ceyhan route might not be enough to make it profitable—especially if oil prices stay low and other pipelines are also built in the Caspian region. In November 1998, Russia, Kazakhstan and Chevron agreed to build a \$2 billion pipeline from Tengiz to

the Russian port of Novorossisk. Would the larger Tengiz oilfield send its oil out through Russia, leaving the Ceyhan route with only the Baku output?

The U.S. government was determined to bring the oil companies "on board"—saying that the pipelines of the Caspian could not be decided by the narrower "ka-ching, ka-ching" calculations of U.S. and European bankers and oil companies. The U.S. government insisted that there were global, geo-strategic interests at stake here—specifically, *who would control the energy resources of the world.*

The Clinton White House operated like world class gangsters, pulling strings and making threats—to make all the other pipelines "disappear" and make the Ceyhan pipeline profitable for the western oil capitalists.

AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

First the U.S. government simply and firmly ruled out *any* Iranian pipeline. They announced they would not lift their embargo on Iran—and they would not allow major U.S. companies to participate in any major projects there. That was the end of the Iranian pipeline.

Then the Russian plans for the northern pipeline "suddenly" ran into huge problems: War broke out in Chechnya and Dagestan—border areas of Russia where oil from Baku travels on its way to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossisk.

War broke out in Dagestan in August 1999—just as the aging Baku-Novorossisk pipeline broke down and the Russian oil corporations were trying to move Baku's oil through Dagestan by rail. Then the fighting spread from Dagestan to nearby Chechnya. The Russian army initiated a brutal campaign to crush resistance and pacify the region. About 200,000 Chechens are refugees, as many as 4,000 may be dead, and much of this small nation has been devastated.

Meanwhile plans for northern Russian-controlled oil pipelines have been torpedoed by this fighting—during *exactly the timeframe* when the oil companies have to decide on which pipeline to begin building. There is no documented evidence that the U.S. unleashed and armed the Muslim secessionist forces of Chechnya. But clearly the timing of this new war has been very useful for U.S. plans in the Caspian.

The Russian Defense Minister has accused the U.S. of wanting the "permanent smoldering of a manageable armed conflict" in this region.

Meanwhile, with U.S. support, a new

pipeline was opened between Baku and the Georgian port of Supsa in April 1999. This pipeline will carry the Baku oil that was *previously* passing north through Chechnya and Dagestan. The opening of the Supsa pipe means that oil will be able to flow out of Azerbaijan—regardless of whether Russia regains control of Chechnya or not.

This Supsa pipeline is small, and cannot carry the massive output expected by 2004—but it will handle much of the production *until the Ceyhan pipeline* is in place. This new Supsa pipeline is especially useful in providing for the oil needs of Ukraine, and helping the U.S. pry the Ukraine (a large country with extremely important industrial and agricultural production) further away from Russia.

Finally, the Turkish government cynically announced that they had "discovered" major environmental problems with letting huge oil tankers pass through the Bosphorus straits—the mouth of the Black Sea which they control. In other words, Turkey is threatening to stop oil-tankers from Novorossisk, which quickly made investors wary of building a pipeline that ended in Novorossisk.

After all these developments—the *only* pipeline that seemed practical was suddenly the U.S.-backed Baku-to-Ceyhan route. The oil companies and the Caspian oil-producing countries had been presented with "an offer they could not refuse."

THE ISTANBUL AGREEMENT

In November 1999, a conference of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) gathered many government representatives to Istanbul—and by then the U.S. government had, quite simply, forced the key regional governments to give the imperialist oil companies the guarantees and finance that these oil monopolies wanted. A new agreement was finally possible, and Clinton flew in for last minute arm-twisting.

- The governments of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan agreed to officially back the Baku-Ceyhan route.

- Turkey's government promised to pay all construction costs *over* \$1.4 billion for the Turkish pipe segment. This meant that, the Ceyhan route was suddenly as cheap, *for the oil companies*, as the Iranian route would have been.

- Kazakhstan promised that in the next century it would send 20 million tons of oil a year through a new, proposed, underwater pipe to Baku and from there *on to Ceyhan.*

Russian plans for a Tengiz-Novorossisk pipeline were knocked back.

In short, the imperialist oil companies were guaranteed protection from cost overruns, and were guaranteed that the Ceyhan pipeline would get most or all of the production of the Caspian. The cost of these "guarantees" would (presumably) come out of the wealth of these regions. And the whole package was backed and blessed by the U.S. godfathers themselves.

The plan is now in place to have this new pipeline ready by 2004—when huge new oil installations now being built in the Caspian region are expected to start sending 1 million barrels a day to Ceyhan.

THE PLOT THICKENS

"Domination on the Black and Caspian seas...is a vital interest for the whole southern half of Russia. If Russia's horizons ended on the snowy summits of the Caucasus range, then the whole western half of the Asian continent would be outside our sphere of influence and...would not long wait for another master."

Russian General Rostislav Fadeev, 1850s, at the start of the first "Great Game" for Central Asia

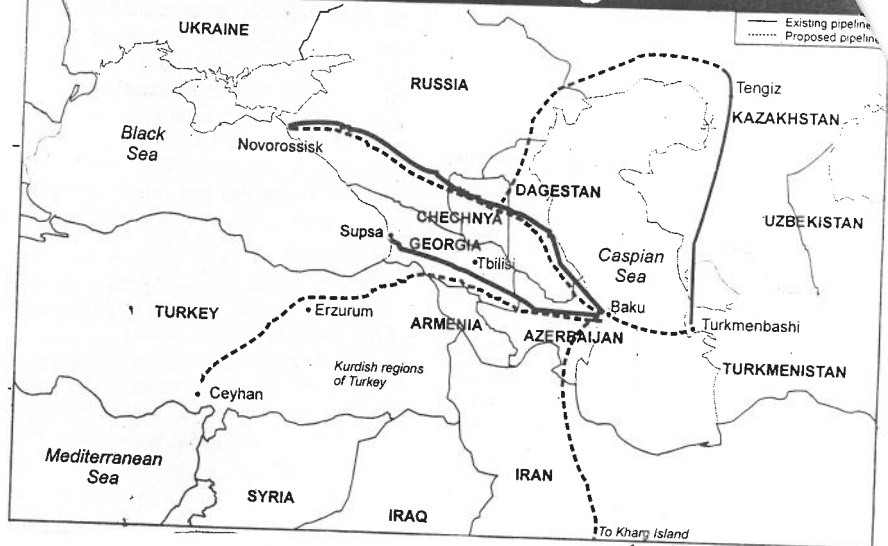
"Chechnya is just the beginning of what we're going to face in this region. Russia is not going to sit back quietly as from its perspective the United States tries to 'undermine its vital strategic interests there."

Martha Brill Olcott, U.S. thinktank expert on the Caspian region, *New York Times*, Nov. 19.

"Central Asia may not yet be in crisis, but it may just be a short bus ride away," said Gavin Graham, regional manager for Royal Dutch/Shell Group. Without naming Russia and Iran, he told an oil and gas conference in Turkmenistan that regional rivals can conspire to keep margins in landlocked Central Asia unprofitable."

Wall Street Journal

Caspian Sea Region



"It seems Clinton has for a minute forgotten that Russia has a full arsenal of nuclear weapons... It has never been and never will be the case that he will dictate to the whole world how to live... We will dictate to the world. Not him alone."

President Boris Yeltsin, defending Russia's reconquest of Chechnya, December 9, 1999

The Istanbul agreements opened the door for the multi-billion-dollar fundraising for the Baku-to-Ceyhan pipeline. That capital must be raised by October 2000, and the construction must start soon after that, if this pipeline is going to be ready by 2004—when major new production of oil is expected in the Caspian region.

However, there will be counter-moves by the Russian imperialists—seeking to retake their chair at the table and seeking to sabotage the completion of the Ceyhan route.

The Russian military intends to pacify Chechnya and surrounding regions—and reestablish a viable overland pipeline route



Central Asia

Russia. And, Russia is strengthening its military presence in the Caspian region itself—reportedly sending new MIG fighters and air defense missiles to its base in Armenia.

In addition, the Baku-Ceyhan route requires a strong pro-western government in the Caucasus country of Georgia. The U.S. currently has such a government there—headed by President Eduard Shevardnadze, who was the Soviet foreign minister under Gorbachev. But now, toppling his government has become a high priority for Russian operations in this region. In 1998 alone, Shevardnadze faced an armed insurrection, a major secessionist movement and a commando-style assassination attempt.

“Permanent smoldering” in Georgia suits Russian imperialist interests—just as “permanent smoldering” in Chechnya suits U.S. imperialist interests.

NATO GUNS IN THE CASPIAN

For now, the “new Great Game” for the Caspian has largely been carried out using dollars and strong-arm diplomacy. But the major powers understand well that the future of this region may ultimately be decided by guns—in coups and warfare. And, for that reason, the U.S. has conducted a huge but unpublicized campaign of drawing the Central Asian countries under its military wing.

Several former Soviet allies in Eastern Europe have been openly recruited directly into NATO’s war alliance—but the U.S. has pursued a slightly different course in Central Asia. Six years ago, NATO created a military sub-alliance called “Partners for Peace” (PFP)—and under that arrangement has been training, arming and deploying military forces around both the Caspian and Black seas. The difference between NATO and PFP is, as one NATO official put it, “razor thin.”

Through PFP, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have formal military liaisons at NATO’s Supreme Headquarters. Under NATO auspices, PFP has created a joint Central Asian Peace-keeping Battalion (CENTRASBAT)—which is the embryo of a NATO-led military force in the region. During the 50th anniversary conference of NATO, in April 1999, an anti-Russian alliance, GUUAM, was formed out of the former southern Soviet republics—Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova.

Azerbaijan and Georgia have developed especially close military ties with NATO. The U.S. and Turkish militaries have been

supplying both countries with NATO-compatible weapons. Azerbaijan has signed a mutual defense treaty with Turkey and a “defense cooperation agreement” with the U.S.

Under PFP, 4,000 military officers from Caucasian countries have received military training in Turkey—a majority of them from Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani soldiers participated as part of a Turkish Army battalion during the Balkan war. It was the first direct deployment of a Caspian unit by NATO.

At the same time, Turkey—a notoriously brutal and repressive state—has been training thousands of pro-western government officials, legal prosecutors and police for the ruling classes of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.

In 1997, NATO organized naval exercises—*Operation Sea Breeze*—on the Black sea—making a statement about who controlled that sea and the oil traffic that crosses it. As Russian troops were leaving Georgia, the flagship of the U.S. 6th fleet entered the Georgian port of Poti. There have already been over a hundred different joint NATO-Georgian military programs and activities.

Common NATO-Georgian military exercises were held around the oil port of Supsa in Georgia during 1998. In May 1999 the U.S. army held joint maneuvers in Kazakhstan—which were officially called “international disaster relief exercises.” That same month, Turkmenistan officially ended the agreement allowing Russian troops to patrol its southern border with Iran and Afghanistan.

In Azerbaijan, top presidential adviser Vafa Guluzade caused a furor in February 1999 by proposing that the U.S. set up a NATO airbase on the Apsheron Peninsula outside Baku. Though the Russian and Iranian governments immediately objected, the U.S. government simply said the plan was not currently under consideration.

Then, in November, a leader of the Azerbaijani parliament proposed that NATO form a special unit to protect the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline. That same month, besieged Chechen President Maschadov called for NATO intervention against the advancing Russian troops in his country.

For the moment, the U.S. and NATO seem to be riding high. But there are already forces within the U.S. ruling class asking whether the U.S. can really expect to back up the major military and economic commitments it has made far away—right on the southern borders of Russia. And they are openly saying that if U.S. soldiers are

going to be prepared to kill and die in any new war for the Caspian Sea—the U.S. government must already now start creating public opinion about the importance of this region.

WHY DO WE CALL THEM IMPERIALISTS?

“The strategic value of the Caspian has been there from the beginning—it never was just about oil.”

Zbigniew Brzezinski, U.S. ruling class architect of the New Great Game

“Why do we call them imperialists? Because they exploit and oppress people all over the world. They have developed an empire and they will do anything to try and preserve it. It is the same people robbing and exploiting, degrading and humiliating us every day that are doing that same thing, and want to do more of it, to the people all around the world. That’s why we call it imperialism, because that’s what it is.”

Chairman Bob Avakian, Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

The U.S. masks its operations in talk of freedom and human rights. This is true in the Caspian too. U.S. politicians talk of training the people of the region in “U.S. style democracy”—while sending them fascist Turkish trainers. The U.S. talks about ending the Russian military abuse of Chechen people—while energetically supporting the Turkish military abuse of the Kurdish people. The U.S. talks about bringing “free trade” to the world and “knocking down barriers”—while spending billions of dollars in semi-secret plots to control the oil trade of the world, and seize control of the oil reserves of the Caspian.

The U.S. is taking advantage of a rival imperialist’s moment of extreme weakness. Russia is deeply in debt, gripped by a paralyzing economic and political crisis—and its military (though heavily armed with nukes) is having great difficulty reasserting control in regions that are officially within Russia.

The *New York Times* called the current White House policies “flogging the half-dead Russian bear.” But if and when this Russian bear emerges from its crisis, it will be determined to reverse the U.S. takeover of the Caspian. There is already an angry demand rising from the Russian ruling class for a government and military that can aggressively reassert their imperialist interests in the Caspian region.

Events in the Caspian region may reveal that there are other imperialists in the world—in Europe or Japan—who do not consider it in their interests for the U.S. to so tightly control all the major oil sources in the world.

In one sense, U.S. expansion in the Caspian is part of the outcome of its victory in the 1980s “Cold War.” But in another sense, it is setting the stage for inter-imperialist rivalries and conflicts in the next century.

Meanwhile, the robbery of wealth, wholesale corruption of governments, threat of reactionary war, foreign exploitation of working people and massive environmental damage—all of these developments reveal the intensely reactionary role that the imperialists, of all these “great powers,” are playing in this region. The wealth and future of Central Asia are being fought over by imperialists from the U.S., Europe and Russia—whose interests have nothing in common with the oppressed people who live and work there. □

Oil at heart of Dagestan war

□ A correspondent in Moscow

RUSSIA had little choice but to step in against Islamic radicals to try to stop civil war breaking out in the small, multi-ethnic republic of Dagestan, analysts said yesterday.

This latest crisis in the northern Caucasus is another threat to Moscow's ambitions to cash in on the Caspian oil boom by bringing Azerbaijani oil through Russian territory.

"Dagestan is part of Russia. It's been invaded and the country will have to react to this," said Anatol Lieven, of London's International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"It's not something from which Russia can simply withdraw. This is part of the national territory."

If Russia pulled out, Mr Lieven said, the republic would slide into civil war.

The republic has more than 30 ethnic minorities in its 2 million strong population, about half of whom are native peoples: about 500,000 Avars, 270,000 Darghins and 200,000 Lezghians. Russians only make up about 10 per cent of the population.

Many analysts see the occupation last weekend of several villages in the south of the republic as the biggest threat to Moscow's authority since the Russo-Chechen war, which lasted from December 1994 to August 1996.

President Yeltsin has vowed to crush the rebel army led by Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev and has sent massive reinforcements in preparation for a major offensive.

Oil expert Euan Craik said the latest crisis threatened Russia's wider ambitions in the region. "Obviously the conflict in Dagestan ruins Russia's plan to become a major transportation corridor for Azeri oil."

The precious oil pipeline linking the Azerbaijani capital, Baku, on the Caspian Sea, with the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk passes through both Dagestan and Chechnya.



Rebel chief: Shamil Basayev



It has been out of action for two months because of security fears and the theft of oil in the breakaway Chechen republic. Now Russia has proposed a new pipeline bypassing Chechnya, but going through Dagestan.

It is the latest move in a high-stakes oil game being played in the region against the US. That is why the latest developments posed such a threat to Moscow, said Mr Craik.

"It's not just Russian financial interests that are hurt. It also weakens its geopolitical influence on former Soviet republics in the region."

□ AFP

A Nightmare War in a Remote Land

TIME, AUGUST 23, 1999

WE MAY LOSE DAGESTAN. Things are bad over there," ex-Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin said as he was surrendering his office last week. Bad they are: a new bout of fighting in Dagestan, a tiny Muslim republic of 2.1 million people and more than 30 ethnic groups in the Russian North Caucasus, is turning into a full-fledged war. In Moscow's political back rooms, there's fear it may evolve into something even more frightening: an excuse to cancel coming elections and clamp a state-of-emergency rule over Russia.

Just two days before Stepashin was fired, some 1,500 Islamic militants armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles, bazookas, self-

one law in particular: no secession from Mother Russia, even if the union has to be retained with Russian blood.

Moscow has more than 5,000 federal soldiers in Dagestan, along with nearly 300 pieces of armor, 50 pieces of heavy artillery, and 30 Grad missile launchers. "This force is as formidable as it is mismanaged," comments retired Colonel Victor Baranets, a military analyst. Says an eyewitness: "The troops have neither maps nor communication. They wear broken boots and mended fatigues. They don't have warm clothes or hot food."

But fierce fire fights in the Dagestani mountains are plenty hot. As the Chechens have become expert hostage takers, the area has turned into a no-transit zone for fearful aid workers, journalists and diplomats. Acting Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has vowed "to restore order and discipline" in Dagestan in 10 to 14 days. He

propelled anti-aircraft guns and armor marched into Dagestan from Chechnya. The move was the latest, most violent shot in a creeping war that has been ravaging Dagestan since Russia's invasion of Chechnya in 1994. Russian federal forces have been continually engaged in action against Chechen raiders eager to see the coastal province of Dagestan annexed into landlocked Chechnya. The province is of vital

strategic importance to Russia, representing 70% of the nation's frontage on the oil-producing Caspian Sea. It's a nightmare war: Russian troops and Dagestani cops have also had to tackle local Islamic militants intent on independence, and ruthless criminal gangs armed with world-class weapons. But Moscow insists on enforcing

declined to say how, lest the enemy be informed. But few think such a simple solution is possible. "This might grow into a protracted local civil war," says Baranets.

Oddly, that may be what Yeltsin wants. Wars in the North Caucasus remain in some eyes a credible excuse for imposing a state of emergency on Russia. Leaders of the Federation Council (the upper house of the Russian Parliament) indicated last week that they would be receptive to emergency measures—a plan that would allow Yeltsin to postpone elections and engineer a less than democratic transition. Hints of that fear were on display last week, as police tightened security around government buildings, airports and railway stations. Patrols clad in bulletproof vests showed up in the Moscow subway, and armor rolled through Moscow's streets for the first time since the end of the Chechen war in 1996.

of the most effective means of aiding the White Russian armies against the Soviet Government.

Churchill, who had replaced Lloyd George at the conference table, proposed the immediate establishment of a Supreme Allied Council for Russian Affairs, with political, economic and military sections. The military section was "to get to work at once" on drawing up the details of a broad program of armed intervention.

With Churchill as the acknowledged but unofficial Commander-in-Chief of the Allied anti-Soviet armies, the scene shifted to London where, during that spring and summer, special White Russian emissaries streamed into the British Government offices at Whitehall. They came, as representatives of Admiral Kolchak, General Denikin, and other White Russian leaders, to make the final arrangements for an all-out drive against the Soviets. Their highly secretive negotiations were conducted for the most part with Winston Churchill and Sir Samuel Hoare. Churchill, as Secretary of War, undertook to equip the White Russian armies with material from Great Britain's accumulation of surplus war supplies. Hoare supervised the complex diplomatic intrigues.

CHAPTER SIX.

The War of Intervention

By the summer of 1919, without declaration of war, the armed forces of fourteen states had invaded the territory of Soviet Russia. The countries involved were:—

Great Britain	Serbia
France	Greece
Japan	Poland
Germany	China
Italy	Finland
United States	Rumania
Czechoslovakia	Turkey

Fighting side by side with the anti-Soviet invaders were the counterrevolutionary White armies led by former Czarist generals striving to restore the feudal aristocracy which the Russian people had overthrown.

The strategy of the attackers was ambitious. The armies of the White generals, moving in conjunction with the interventionist troops, were to converge on Moscow from the north, south, east and west.

In the north and north-west, at Archangel, Murmansk and in the Baltic States, the forces of the British stood poised alongside the White Russian troops of General Nicholas Yudenitch.

In the south, at bases in the Caucasus and along the Black Sea, were the White armies of General Anton Denikin, amply supplied and reinforced by the French.

In the east, Admiral Alexander Kolchak's forces, operating under

British Military advisors, were encamped along the Ural mountains. In the west, under the leadership of French officers, were General Pilsudski's newly organized Polish armies.

Allied statesmen advanced various reasons for the presence of their troops in Russia. When their soldiers first landed in Murmansk and Archangel in the spring and summer of 1918, the Allied Governments declared the troops had come to prevent supplies from falling into the hands of the Germans. Later they explained their troops were in Siberia to help the Czechoslovakian forces withdraw from Russia. Another reason given for the presence of Allied detachments was that they were helping the Russians to "restore order" in their troubled land.

Repeatedly, Allied statesmen denied any intention of armed intervention against the Soviets, or of interfering with Russia's internal affairs. "We do not propose to interfere with the international arrangements of Russia," declared Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, in August, 1918. "She must manage her own affairs."

The ironic and invariably blunt Winston Churchill, who himself supervised the Allied campaign against Soviet Russia, later wrote in his book, *the World Crisis: the Aftermath*:—

Were they [the Allies] at war with Russia? Certainly not; but they shot Soviet Russians at sight. They stood as invaders on Russian soil. They armed the enemies of the Soviet Government. They blockaded the ports and sunk its battleships. They earnestly desired and schemed its downfall. But war—shocking! Interference—shame! It was, they repeated, a matter of indifference to them how Russians settled their own affairs. They were impartial—bang!

The young Soviet Government struggled for its life in the face of desperate odds. The country had been laid waste and exhausted by the World War. Millions were destitute and starving. The factories were empty, the land unplowed, transport at a standstill. It seemed impossible that such a country could survive the fierce onslaught of an enemy with large, well-equipped armies, vast financial reserves, ample food and other supplies.

Besieged on all sides by foreign invaders, impelled by endless conspiracies at home, the Red Army retreated slowly across the countryside, fighting grimly as it went. The territory controlled by Moscow dwindled to one-sixteenth of Russia's total area. It was Soviet island in an anti-Soviet sea.

On September 5, 1919, Senator Borah arose in the Senate and declared:—

Mr. President, we are not at war with Russia; Congress has not declared war against the Russian government or the Russian people. The people of the United States do not desire to be

war with Russia. . . . Yet, while we are not at war with Russia, while Congress has not declared war, we are carrying on war with the Russian people. We have an army in Russia; we are furnishing munitions and supplies to other armed forces in that country, and we are just as thoroughly engaged in conflict as though constitutional authority had been invoked, a declaration of war has been made, and the nation had been called to arms for that purpose. . . . There is neither legal nor moral justification for sacrificing these lives. It is in violation of the plan principles of free government.

Nevertheless, the undeclared war against Russia went on . . .

The two and a half years of bloody intervention and civil war were responsible for the death through battle, starvation or disease of some 7,000,000 Russian men, women and children. The material losses to the country were later estimated by the Soviet Government at \$60,000,000,000, a sum far in excess of the Czarist debt to the Allies. No reparations were paid by the invaders.

Few official figures were given of the cost of the Allied taxpayers of the war against Russia. According to a memorandum issued by Winston Churchill on September 15, 1919, Great Britain to that date had spent nearly £100,000,000 sterling and France between £30,000,000 and £40,000,000 on General Denikin alone. The British campaign in the north cost £18,000,000. The Japanese admitted the expenditure of 900,000,000 yen on the maintenance on their 70,000 troops in Siberia.

What were the motives behind this futile and costly undeclared war?

The White generals were frankly fighting for the restoration of their own Great Russia, for their landed estates, their profits, their class privileges and their epaulettes. There were a few sincere nationalists among them, but the White Armies were overwhelmingly dominated by reactionaries who were the prototypes of the fascist officers and adventurers who were later to emerge in Central Europe.

The war aims of the Allies in Russia were less clear.

The intervention was finally presented to the world by Allied spokesmen, in so far as its motives were publicised at all, as a political crusade against Bolshevism.

Actually, "anti-Bolshevism" played a secondary role. Such factors as north Russian timber, Donets coal, Siberian gold and Caucasian oil carried more weight. There were also such large-scale imperialist interests as the British plan for a Trans-Caucasian Federation which would seal off India from Russia, and make possible exclusive British domination of the oil fields of the Near East; the Japanese plan for the conquest and colonisation of Siberia; the French plan to gain control in the Donets and Black Sea areas;

and the ambitious long-range German plan to seize the Baltic States and the Ukraine.

A British member of Parliament, Lieutenant Colonel Cecil L'Estrange Malone, told the House of Commons during a somewhat heated debate on Allied policy in Russia in 1920:—

There are groups of people and individuals in this country who have money and shares in Russia, and they are the people who are working, scheming and intriguing to overthrow the Bolshevik regime. . . . Under the old regime, it was possible to get ten or twenty per cent. out of exploiting the Russian workers and peasants, but under socialism it will not be possible to get anything at all probably, and we find that nearly every great interest in this country in some way or another is connected with Soviet Russia.

The Russian Year Book for 1918, the speakers went on, had estimated combined British and French investments in Russia at approximately £1,600,000,000 sterling, or close to \$8,000,000,000.

There was the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company, whose Russian interests had included the Ural Caspian Oil Company, the North Caucasian Oilfield, the New Schibareff Petroleum Company and many other oil concerns; there was the great British arms trust of Metro-Vickers which, together with the French Schneider-Crusot and the German Krupp, had virtually controlled the Czarist munitions industry; there were the big banking houses of Britain and France: the Hoares, Baring Brothers, Hambros, Credit Lyonnais, Societe Generale, Rothschilds and Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris, all of which had invested huge sums in the Czarist regime.

"All these big interests," Colonel Malone informed the House of Commons, "are interwoven with one another. They are all interested in keeping the war going with Russia. . . . Behind these interests and behind the financiers who sit on the other side of the House are the newspapers and the other influences which go to make up public opinion in this country."

The most notable American to identify himself with the anti-Soviet war was Herbert Hoover, the future President of the United States, who at that time was the American Food Administrator.

A former mining engineer employed by British concerns, prior to the First World War, Herbert Hoover had had investments in Russian oil wells and mines. The corrupt Czarist regime swarmed with high officials and land-owning aristocrats ready to barter their country's wealth and labor power in return for foreign bribes or a share in the spoils. Hoover had become interested in Russian oil as far back as 1909 when the wells at Maikop were first opened. Within a year, he had secured an interest in no less than eleven Russian oil companies:—

Maikop Neftyanoi Syndicate
Maikop Shirvansky Oil Company
Maikop Apsheron Oil Company

Maikop and General Petroleum Trust
 Maikop Oil and Petroleum Products
 Maikop Areas Oil Company
 Maikop Valley Oil Company
 Maikop Mutual Oil Company
 Maikop Hadijensky Syndicate
 Maikop New Producers Company
 Amalgamated Maikop Oilfields

By 1912, the former mining engineer was associated with the famous British multimillionaire, Leslie Urquhart, in three new companies which had been set up to exploit timber and mineral concessions in the Urals and Siberia. Urquhart then floated the Russo-Asiatic Corporation and made a deal with two Czarist banks whereby this Corporation would handle all mining prospects in those areas. Russo-Asiatic shares rose from \$16.25 in 1913 to \$47.50 in 1914. That same year the Corporation obtained three new profitable concessions from the Czarist regime which comprised:—

2,500,000 acres of land, including vast timberland, and water-power; estimated gold, copper, silver and zinc reserves of 7,262,000 tons; 12 developed mines; 2 copper smelters; 20 saw-mills; 250 miles of railroad; blast furnaces, rolling mills, sulphuric acid plants, gold refineries; huge coal reserves.

The total value of these properties was estimated at \$1,000,000,000.

By 1917 Hoover had withdrawn from the Russo-Asiatic Corporation, and had sold his Russian holdings. After the Bolshevik Revolution all the concessions with which Hoover had formerly been associated were abrogated and the mines confiscated by the Soviet Government.

"Bolshevism," said Herbert Hoover at the Paris Peace Conference, "is worse than war!"

He was to remain one of the world's bitterest foes of the Soviet Government for the rest of his life. It is a fact, whatever his personal motive may have been, that under his supervision American food sustained the White Russians and fed the storm troops of the most reactionary regimes in Europe which were engaged in suppressing the upsurge of democracy after the First World War. Thus American relief became a weapon against the peoples' movement in Europe.

"The whole of American policy during the liquidation of the Armistice was to contribute everything it could to prevent Europe from going Bolshevik or being overrun by their armies," Hoover later declared in a letter to Oswald Garrison Villard on August 17, 1921. His definition of "Bolshevism" coincided with that of Foch, Petain, Knox, Reilly and Tanaka. As Secretary of Commerce, as President of the United States, and subsequently as a leader of the isolationist wing of the Republican Party, he fought untiringly to prevent the establishment of friendly commercial and diplomatic

relations between America and America's most powerful ally against world fascism, the Soviet Union.

The armed intervention failed in Russia not only because of the unprecedented solidarity and heroism of the Soviet peoples who were fighting to defend their new-won freedom, but also because of the strong support given the young Soviet Republic by the democratic peoples throughout the world. In France, England and the United States, an aroused public opinion had vigorously opposed the sending of men, arms, food and money to the anti-Soviet armies in Russia. "Hands Off Russia!" committees were formed. Workers struck and soldiers mutinied against the interventionist policies of the General Staffs. Democratic statesmen, journalists, educators, and many businessmen protested against the undeclared and unprovoked attack on Soviet Russia.

Sir Henry Wilson, British Chief of Staff, frankly acknowledged the lack of public support of the Allied interventionist policy. On December 1, 1919, in the official British Blue Book, the Chief of Staff wrote:—

The difficulties of the Entente in formulating a Russian policy have, indeed, proved insurmountable, since in no Allied country has there been a sufficient weight of public opinion to justify armed intervention against the Bolsheviks on a decisive scale, with the inevitable result that military operations have lacked cohesion and purpose.

The victory of the Red Army over its enemies thus represented at the same time an international victory for the democratic peoples of all countries.

A final reason for the failure of the intervention was the lack of unity among the invaders. The instigators of the intervention represented a coalition of world reaction, but it was a coalition without genuine co-operation. Imperialist rivalries rended the imperialist coalition. The British feared French ambitions in the Black Sea and German ambitions in the Baltic area. The Americans found it necessary to frustrate Japanese aims in Siberia. The White Generals quarreled among themselves over the spoils.

The war of intervention, begun in secrecy and dishonesty, ended in shameful disaster.

Its legacy of hatred and mistrust was to poison the atmosphere of Europe for the next quarter of a century.

The Great Conspiracy 51
 by M. Sayers & A. Kahn Sydney
 Current Book Distributors 1949

II. MODERN WAR IS BORN OF IMPERIALISM

WAR IS AN INEVITABLE PRODUCT OF CAPITALISM

Modern war is born of imperialism. Capitalism has reached this highest stage. The productive forces of society and the dimensions of capital have outgrown the narrow framework of separate national states. Hence the striving of the Great Powers to enslave other nations, to seize colonies as sources of raw material and places for the export of capital. The whole world is merging into a single economic organism; the whole world is divided up among a handful of Great Powers. The objective conditions for Socialism have fully matured and the present war is a war of the capitalists for privileges and monopolies to postpone the collapse of capitalism.

From "Draft Resolution of the Zimmerwald Left" (before August 20, 1915).

24

... THIS war was caused inevitably by that development of enormously big capitalism, particularly banking, which led to the situation where about four banks in Berlin and five or six in London dominate the whole world, taking everything to themselves, bolstering their financial policies with all the armed forces and finally, coming into conflict in an unexampled and ferocious struggle because there was no way of further advance by the method of free seizure. Either one or the other must give up the mastery of its colonies. Such questions are not decided voluntarily in this world of capitalists. This can only be decided by war.

From "War and Revolution"
(May 14, 1917).

I. HOW MARXISTS LOOK AT WAR

UNSWERVINGLY DENOUNCING WARS, COMMUNISTS KNOW THAT WARS ARE INEVITABLE AS LONG AS CLASSES EXIST

Social-Democracy has never regarded and does not regard war from a sentimental point of view. Unswervingly denouncing wars as a brutal method of deciding the disputes of mankind, Social-Democracy knows that wars are inevitable as long as society is divided into classes, as long as the exploitation of man by man exists. And in eliminating this exploitation we will not be able to get by without wars which the exploiting, dominating and oppressing classes always and everywhere begin themselves.

From "The Revolutionary Army and the Revolutionary Government" (published in *Proletarii*, No. 7, July 10, 1905).

1

LENIN ON WAR AND PEACE

What is our programme? To win Socialism. At the present stage of the world war there is no way out of it except by the victory of Socialism. But many people do not understand this. Now the majority of mankind are against the bloody slaughter, but cannot understand that it is directly connected with the capitalist system.