

DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY EFFERVESCENCE AS A REFLECTION OF THE TRADE WAR

The Russian army began its offensive on February 24th 2022. Despite its initial rapid advance, it failed to reach Kiev in the first few days, having to stop to secure supplies. The next phase saw the Russian army concentrating its effort on controlling the Donbas. The Russian army concentrated on securing the southern connection, taking Mariupol and the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Ukrainian troops are currently deploying an offensive in the south and north. In any of the phases, the deaths are suffered by the proletariat of both countries in a criminal war in which all the contenders represent their own- and third-party imperialist interests.

Social control and militarization

In Ukraine and in Russia, militarization measures have been taken and are being taken at an accelerated pace, which should serve as a warning to the proletariat of the countries not yet belligerent.

Since the entry of Russian troops into Ukraine, the Ukrainian government banned men between the ages of 18 and 60 from leaving the country, instituted compulsory registration in military offices, and through compulsory conscription *"now has around 700,000 active soldiers."* (Bloomberg, 09-21-2022). This is evidence that the "defense of the fatherland" is done by coercion of the bourgeois state and that the workers are enlisted by force, as is also evidenced by the use by the Ukrainian bourgeoisie of veterans of the war in Afghanistan to "teach new soldiers to overcome the taboo of killing".

Both in Ukraine and in Russia, there are settling of scores and arrests of dissidents or "suicides" such as that of the president of Lukoil, a company that had spoken out against the war, and four Gazprom executives.

For its part, Russia has eliminated the maximum age for enlisting in the armed forces, has decreed an increase in the number of army personnel through an incentive plan, has introduced flag raising, provides patriotic and militaristic training in schools and institutes and has created a youth organization to promote patriotism.

In view of the military setbacks and accusations of treason for not deploying its full military potential, Russia has had to announce on September 21st the mobilization of 300,000 reservists and is holding integration referendums in the occupied areas. These referendums are associated with the declaration to use nuclear weapons in case of aggression on its borders and the deployment of the army considering the area as Russian. On the production field, Russia has promoted a law for the war economy so that the enterprises will not be able to refuse government orders and that the government will be able to impose on the workers overtime, night work, work on weekends or vacations. To impose these working conditions, they count on the collaboration of the "workers' representatives", that is, on the straitjacket of subsidized trade unionism.

Against this bourgeois coercive machine which operates on both sides of the front to force the proletarians to die and to kill other class brothers, neither conscientious objections nor the illusions of pacifism are of any use. The only useful slogan for the proletariat is the revolutionary slogan of turning the barrels of the guns against its "own" bourgeoisie, the only one that can stop the bloodbath among class brothers and transform the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war: *"You will be given a gun. Take it and learn the military art properly. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as the*

traitors to socialism are telling you to do. They need it to fight the bourgeoisie of their own country, to put an end to exploitation, poverty and war, and not by pious wishes, but by defeating and disarming the bourgeoisie." (The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution, Lenin, 1916).

Imperialist military support to Ukraine

Ukrainian capitalism counts on the provisioning of weapons by: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UK and USA.

The US has approved in March and May two packages to provide continued aid to Ukrainian capitalism, of \$13.6 billion and \$40 billion respectively. In these budgets, two thirds are military aid, another third is money to sustain the functioning of the state and a residual part is earmarked for civilian food programs. In August, the U.S. was preparing to send \$1 billion in military aid from its weapons stockpiles, the 18th drawdown of existing inventories since August 2021.

The UK announced on April 10, 2022, the contribution of military hardware and, during the NATO summit, announced the shipment of supplementary aid worth 1.16 billion euros, which will include air defenses, drones and electronic warfare equipment.

The EU has also started supplying armaments to Ukraine. Germany changed its previous policy at the end of May, announcing the shipment of 50 Gepard tanks and training for Ukrainian troops. The reality of the war has imposed a retreat of the sector tending towards an entente with Russia or at least to a position of neutrality: it is too dangerous to simply allow Russian imperialism to occupy any country in the area of influence of the EU and neither can they allow these countries to fall into the arms of the USA completely.

However, Hungary has dissociated itself from the rest of the EU countries: *"We do not want the Hungarian-Ukrainian border to be an arena for arms deliveries. (...) We will not send or allow the transit of arms."* (El País, 12-05-2022).

Chinese companies, such as drone manufacturer DJI, have also acted cautiously: *"announced the temporary suspension of its operations in Russia and Ukraine to prevent its devices from being used as weapons."* (La Vanguardia, 28-04-2022).

On the other hand, the analysis of 27 Russian weapons or weapon systems found on the ground, show that *"more than 450 electronic components manufactured outside Russia were found, up to 70% of them by US companies, and the rest, from Japan, Taiwan, Switzerland, Holland, Germany, China, South Korea, the UK and Austria."* (La Vanguardia, 13-08-2022). Business is business and *"a Russian company would have imported in March (with the war already underway) Texas Instruments material worth 600,000 dollars."* (La Vanguardia, 13-08-2022).

Resurrection and enlargement of NATO

NATO has been given a major resuscitation at the Madrid summit with the modification of the definition of its "strategic concept". The resulting text refers to Russia as *"the most significant and direct threat"* and to China saying that *"its ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests"*. A statement pledging *the "defense of every inch of allied territory"* has also been added. This is evidently a further step towards

preparing for World War III, but in the face of such a bombastic statement it is worth remembering that US military policy has been more to whip up one against the other and then intervene from afar or when the balance is already tipped. It remains to be seen whether this bloc will really remain united when one of its members goes to war.

Finland and Sweden have been invited to join NATO and, despite initial resistance from Turkey, their integration process is almost complete. Turkey has obtained, in exchange for not blocking the process, commitments from Finland and Sweden to lift the arms embargo, revise anti-terrorism legislation and sign extradition treaties to hand over Kurdish and Turkish exiles claimed by Turkey.

The number of NATO troops on alert has increased to 300,000. The US sent 20,000 troops to Europe in February, which brought the number of US troops to 100,000. The US military presence in Europe will further increase with two new destroyers at the Rota base, the opening of a headquarters and support battalion in Poland, a 3,000-strong brigade in Romania, increased military presence in the Baltic countries, two additional F-35 squadrons in the UK and reinforced anti-aircraft positions in Germany and Italy.

The war in Ukraine has generated a greater integration of EU imperialism, but it has also evidenced its military weakness and important contradictions within it, which will be analyzed in more detail in the article on the *"Integrations and disintegrations of the European imperialist union"*.

Military exercises organized by Russia

Russia has continued to organize and participate in military exercises worldwide, such as the military exercises held in Venezuela by Russia, China and Iran in August 2022 and the maneuvers held in Russia in September with the participation of China, India, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Syria, Algeria, Mongolia, Laos and Nicaragua (which has given the green light for the installation of Russian military bases on its territory).

These or similar exercises have been promoted by Russia for years. As an example, in September 2019, military exercises were jointly conducted in Russia by China, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In December 2019, Russia and India held joint military exercises on Indian territory. In February 2021, Russia organized another military exercises with the participation of India and 10 other countries including China and Pakistan as observers.

Keep in mind that, in addition to training thousands of foreign military personnel in its schools, *"between 2017 and 2021, Russia has become the second largest exporter of armaments in the world, with a market share of 19%."* (La Vanguardia, 16-08-2022).

Conflicts in Europe, the Caucasus and central Asia

The war in Ukraine is not a war between Russia and Ukraine but the manifestation of a larger conflict.

The Russian Foreign Minister was unable to visit Serbia in June because of the closure of airspace by Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Montenegro. It is true that Serbia condemned Russia at the UN but has refused to apply any sanctions. It has also agreed *"to extend for three years the purchase of natural gas from Russia at a reduced price (...) it is the fourth most dependent country in the world on Russian gas (almost completely), its main electricity companies are mostly owned by Russian companies (...) the pro-Russian demonstrations for the war have attracted more people than the pro-Ukrainian ones."*

(El País, 07-06-2022).

In August, there have been a series of blockades of the Kosovo border by the Serb minority after the government stopped recognizing documentation issued in Serbia. Nor does Serbia recognize Kosovar documentation and Police and NATO intervention forces have been deployed in view of the blockades and barricades erected. Finally, with the intervention of European imperialism, the waters have been temporarily calmed with an agreement on mutual recognition of documentation.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UN representative has vetoed a law of the Bosnian Serb Republic, which has prompted the Russian embassy to denounce the UN as a destabilizer, while *"not recognizing its authority and considering its activities illegitimate."* (La Vanguardia, 14-04-2022).

Russia has demanded that Moldova, which imports 89% of its gas from Russia, pay the interest on the debt contracted, consisting of *"417 million euros, although with interest it rises to 683 million"* (El País, 14-05-2022), on pain of cutting off its supplies. In parallel, the EU declared that *"we announced last year a support of seven million euros for [military] equipment; this year, we plan to increase this amount."* (El País, 05-05-2022).

In Transnistria, where Russia maintains 2,000 troops, there was an attack with *"grenade launchers against the Ministry of State Security, there were two explosions in the broadcasting center in the town of Maiak and they also attacked a military unit in Parcani"*. (La Vanguardia, 27-04-2022). The Moldovan government claims that this is a provocation to justify further Russian deployment. Be that as it may, what is evident is that the powder keg is ready and is being played around merrily with a lit lighter. Transnistria is home to the largest arms depot in Eastern Europe and the EU has just accepted Moldova as a candidate to strengthen its government. Russia claims that *"any action against its troops in Transnistria will be a direct attack on Russia."* (Europa Press, 01-09-2022).

On September 13th the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan again caught fire, with military clashes on their borders ending with 49 Armenian soldiers and 50 Azeri soldiers dead. Each bourgeoisie accuses the other of having initiated the clash and Armenia has asked Russia for military aid. Recall that Russia has a military base in Armenia and 2,000 troops in Nagorno-Karabakh but in 2020 refused to help Armenia militarily. Turkey has stated that it is *"always on Azerbaijan's side"* (Bloomberg, 13-09-2022) and Russia has negotiated a ceasefire with both sides. From the point of view of imperialist interests, the detonation of a military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan would be an attempt to confront Turkey and Russia, with a possible additional gas cut-off to the EU as a collateral effect.

A clash has also erupted on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in which 24 soldiers have been killed, which has been quickly followed by a ceasefire agreement.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The economic and security cooperation organization consisting of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan and Iran held its summit in Uzbekistan. Turkey (a NATO member) and an observer country of the SCO since 2014 also participated and has applied for membership.

At this meeting both China and India have asked Russia for explanations about its military intervention in Ukraine, without withdrawing support for it.

In any case, the focus of China's attention has been on instructing the rest to resist any foreign interference aimed at destabilizing their territories, foreseeing the movements that the US will try to organize and also the spontaneous explosions that the escalation of the material situation may produce; as is currently happening in Iran with the repression of the protests that so far total 41 murders of demonstrators and has led to the closure of the Internet.

Military intervention in Syria

In July a summit has been held between Turkey, Russia and Iran in which they agreed on the coordination of their military intervention in Syria and, in the words of the representative of Iranian capitalism, "to put an end to Washington's influence in the conflict" (El País, 20-07-2022).

Military bloc of Israel and four Arab countries

As for Israel, Morocco's recognition and Saudi Arabia's permission for its planes to fly over the Arabian Peninsula, it should be added that: "The heads of diplomacy of Israel, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco coordinated yesterday to dissuade Iran. (...) The unprecedented meeting, blessed by the presence of the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, gave birth to a 'stable forum for cooperation in security, intelligence and technology in a framework of progress and religious tolerance'". (El País, 29-03-2022).

The imperialist struggle in Africa

The Global Security Initiative promoted by China has been put into operation in the Horn of Africa, where China has convened a "peace" summit attended by seven of the eight countries in the area (Eritrea was absent). China has imperialist political as well as economic reasons: "Chinese credits worth \$33.9 billion have flooded into the region since 2000 (...) earlier this month, a Chinese group of companies bought a \$560 million stake in a zinc and copper mine in Eritrea." (The Wire, 26-06-2022). In addition to investing in infrastructure, China has also been involved to a lesser extent in arms sales: "From 2010 to 2020, nearly a fifth of all Chinese arms sales were to African countries, with about 20% of them going to East Africa." (The Wire, 26-06-2022).

In the Sahel, the 5,500 French soldiers have had to leave Mali completely, the Spanish soldiers have gone from 600 to 400 and are expected to be reduced to 200, Germany reduces from 600 to 300 its military present in the area which will be stationed in Niger and not in Mali. **European imperialism has been swept out of the Sahel.** In its place there are, in Mali, some 2,000 Russian military and mercenaries. Russia is negotiating the construction of a military base in Sudan and has troops also in Central African Republic. China, which already has a military base in Djibouti, is negotiating the installation of a second base in Equatorial Guinea. The current situation is well described by the following excerpt: "The Malian army received last week a new batch of weapons from Russia consisting of six fighter planes and helicopters, and President Putin promised by telephone to the coup leader, Colonel Assimi Goita, to extend military aid to other areas, such as food and energy. Last week, a relief of German soldiers from the UN mission in Mali, Minusma, found themselves banned by Mali from landing." (La Vanguardia, 16-02-2022).

This withdrawal of European troops has been followed by an increase in attacks and attacks by so-called *jihadist* groups (let us recall that most of these groups have been or are financed by the same US or European states), in retaliation for the military

operation of the Malian army and a hundred Russian mercenaries in Moura.

What are the material bases of this almost effortless expulsion of European imperialism from the Sahel?

Russia's trade with Africa is 20 billion euros a year and one third of the arms bought in Africa comes from Russia. The main buyers are Egypt and Algeria, but also Nigeria, Sudan, Angola, or Mali.

On April 12, 2022, Russia and Cameroon signed "a military agreement for the exchange of information and training of troops, a type of pact that has become common currency in Africa and exists in about twenty countries." (El País, 04-05-2022). Regarding China: "In the last 20 years, a small handful of Chinese state-owned and financial companies have financed one in five new infrastructure projects in Africa and built a third of them. More than half of the Chinese-funded projects are related to the transport sector, including ports and railroads, followed by those related to energy. (...) A quarter of Africa's commercial ports have links to Chinese companies, leaving only eight coastal or island countries without some form of Chinese port infrastructure. (...) The greatest concentration is in West Africa, from where critical minerals including bauxite, cobalt and copper are exported. (...) Just four rail projects completed between 2015 and 2017 have added nearly 2,800 kilometers of track (...) Chinese builders and financiers have backed at least 78 power plants - using mostly hydropower or coal - with a total generating capacity of nearly 27,000 megawatts, roughly the equivalent of Belgium. (...) ZTE has telecom projects in at least 60% of African countries, while Huawei has won concessions for an estimated 70% of the continent's 4G networks." (The Wire, 22-05-2022).

Afghanistan

Amid grandiloquent declarations, the US announced that it had killed with a drone a member (currently irrelevant) of Al Qaeda in Kabul. US influence has been reduced to a minimum after its withdrawal, without prejudice to using the Islamic State of Khorasan to create occasional difficulties for the ruling Taliban sector in favor of modern capitalist management, such as the attack on a Taliban official in favor of allowing women to study.

On the contrary, at the SCO summit, China proposed to help "Afghanistan to create "inclusive" political structures and eliminate "the breeding ground of terrorism"." (La Vanguardia, 17-09-2022), i.e., to support the Afghan government and extend Chinese influence in this state.

The struggle for the Central Indo-Pacific

China failed in June to get a dozen Pacific Islands Forum countries to sign its "China-Pacific Island Nations Joint Development Vision" agreement that included a much closer relationship in "security, trade or technology" (La Vanguardia, 04-06-2022). However, in April, it had managed to sign an agreement with the Solomon Islands that "contemplated issues of trade, fishing and - above all - security, by allowing the dispatch of Chinese security forces to maintain social order. Chinese military ships will be able to make visits and carry out 'logistical replacements'" (El País, 28-05-2022). This agreement has generated concern in Australia and the US that China may end up installing a naval base there. The Solomon Islands began recognizing China instead of Taiwan in 2019.

The US has also alleged that China is building a naval base in Cambodia, but both China and Cambodia deny this. What they do admit is that they will jointly expand the Ream base. The US has reasons for this nervousness that sees in every move by China a new military base because, regardless of whether they

are or not, the fact is that Chinese influence in the area will inevitably spread and, if it does not have them now, it will have them.

In March the US and the Philippines held their largest joint military exercises in three decades: *"5,100 US troops and 3,800 Philippine soldiers will train in the South Asian country from March 28 to April 8. (...)"* (Bloomberg, 23-03-2022).

Provocations in Taiwan and Korea

Despite the opposition of the US President himself, the Speaker of the US Congress (also a member of the Democratic Party) paid an official visit to Taiwan in early August.

It is not the first time that a US representative has visited Taiwan recently, see "El Comunista" n° 64 (p. 21-22).

This visit prompted a show of military force by China which carried out its largest military exercises close to the island, using live fire and reproducing a sea and air blockade of Taiwan. This has been accompanied by a multiplication of patriotic nationalist rhetoric on both sides. China also responded with the temporary blockade of *"imports of more than a hundred products from multiple Taiwanese food companies"* (El País, 03-08-2022), highlighting Taiwan's economic dependence on exports to China.

China claims that maneuvers around Taiwan will be commonplace and are, in the words of the Chinese state-owned media Global Times, a *"rehearsal for reunification operations"* (El País, 08-08-2022). China has also sanctioned for life seven Taiwanese politicians and officials.

The US has continued to fuel the provocations with two subsequent visits by two groups of US parliamentarians to Taiwan, parading a couple of ships through international waters in the Taiwan Strait and even signing a trade pact with Taiwan. He has also approved the *"sale of defensive weapons to Taiwan for close to \$1.1 billion."* However, *"The transaction may take years (!) to materialize (...)"* (La Vanguardia, 04-09-2022).

The US is playing on top of a powder keg with a lighter that only makes sparks, hoping that, due to a miscalculation, someone will cause a real flame and the keg will explode. The only thing they can do is to provoke, and China has no reason to let itself be provoked because time is on its side (unlike Russia with Ukraine, for example). Neither can the US support Taiwan commercially, nor will it intervene militarily to help it. Economically, the US is the world's biggest debtor and Taiwan's economy is fully integrated with that of China. On the military front, the US has had to withdraw its military with its tail between its legs from Iraq and Afghanistan while recovering its historic strategy of waiting until the others have bled to death before intervening. However, all of the above does not mean that the powder keg may not explode.

The same pyromaniac game is being played in Korea, where the US has conducted joint military maneuvers with the South Korean army. To the more than 30 missiles launched into the Sea of Japan by North Korea in 2022 are now added the 8 missiles also launched by South Korea and the US on June 6. In any case, in South Korea there were important demonstrations against the military exercises with the US and to change the policy towards North Korea and China.

The bourgeoisie itself already speaks openly in its own media of a third world war

The Russian Foreign Minister (Lavrov) declared on 26-04-2022 about the third world war that *"the danger is serious, it is real, it cannot be underestimated"*. Something similar was said by the Chancellor of Germany (Scholz) who declared in Der

Spiegel that *"I am doing what I can to prevent a third world war"*, at the same time committing himself to send armaments to Ukraine.

In the following passage of the Manifesto we find all the determining ingredients of the present situation: the need for the destruction of the excessive productive forces and a new partitioning of the world: *"On the one hand by enforced DESTRUCTION of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the CONQUEST of new markets, and by the more thorough EXPLOITATION of the old ones."* (Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848).

Our Party has affirmed: *"The true and proper crisis that will arise historically between the second and third world wars will be, even more than that between the first and second wars, international, (...). And this crisis will place the world on the eve of another general war, if it will not place it on the eve of the revolution, one of whose conditions is the development, which requires decades, of a party whose program is destructive of the "myth of production" and of the "myth of consumption", linked by the "mercantile myth" (The Course of World Capitalism in the Historical Experience and the Doctrine of Marx, 1958).*

As Marxists, we do not therefore need the declarations of the bourgeoisie to be certain of the inevitability (if a revolution does not prevent it) of the third world war, imposed by the development of the crisis of relative overproduction of capital. Having said this, it seems to us symptomatic that in the will and external manifestations of the representatives of the impersonal system that is capitalism, this future course of events is beginning to be reflected with greater clarity.

The present conflicts are the prelude to a greater conflict that executes the destruction that capitalism needs. In this situation, for the world proletariat the only alternative road to being immolated as cannon fodder in the world slaughter is to recover the slogans of **revolutionary defeatism**, of **class internationalism**, its organization in **International Communist Party** for **the transformation of the imperialist war into revolutionary civil war**, the **overthrow of its own bourgeoisie** and the transitory establishment of the **dictatorship of the proletariat** towards a society without classes, without private property, without wage labor, without mercantile and company regime.

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