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## The Age of Imperial Wars

By Prof. James Petras

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*2015 has become a year of living dangerously.*

*Wars are spreading across the globe.*

*Wars are escalating as new countries are bombed and the old are ravaged with ever greater intensity.*

*Countries, where relatively peaceful changes had taken place through recent elections, are now on the verge of civil wars.*

*These are wars without victors, but plenty of losers; wars that don't end; wars where imperial occupations are faced with prolonged resistance.*

There are never-ending torrents of war refugees flooding across borders. Desperate people are detained, degraded and criminalized for being the survivors and victims of imperial invasions.

Now major nuclear powers face off in Europe and Asia: NATO versus Russia, US-Japan versus China. Will these streams of blood and wars converge into one radiated wilderness drained of its precious life blood?

### **Living Dangerously: The Rising Tide of Violent Conflicts**

There is no question that wars and military threats have replaced diplomacy, negotiations and democratic elections as the principal means of resolving political conflicts. Throughout the present year (2015) wars have spread across borders and escalated in intensity.

The NATO allies, US, Turkey and the EU have openly attacked Syria with air strikes and ground troops. There are plans to occupy the northern sector of that ravaged country, creating what the Erdogan regime dubs a 'buffer zone' cleansed of its people and villages.

Under the pretext of 'fighting ISIS', the Turkish government is bombing Kurds (civilians and resistance fighters) and their Syrian allies. On Syria's southern border, US Special Forces have accelerated and expanded operations from their bases in Jordan on behalf of the mercenary terrorists – funded by the monarchist Gulf States.

Over 4 million Syrians have fled their homes as refugees and over 200,000 have been killed since the US-EU-Turkey-Saudi-sponsored war against the secular Syrian government was launched four years ago.

Dozens of terrorist, mercenary and sectarian groups have carved up Syria into rival fiefdoms, pillaged its economic and cultural resources and reduced the economy by over ninety percent.

The US-EU-Turkish military intervention extends the war into Iraq, Lebanon and.... Turkey – attacking secular governments, ethnic minority groups and secular civil society.



The feudal, monarchist Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have invaded Yemen with tanks, launching air strikes against a country without any air defenses. Major cities and towns are devastated. Saudi ground troops and armored carriers are killing and wounding thousands – mostly civilians. The brutal Saudi air and sea blockade of Yemen's ports have led to a humanitarian crisis, as ten million Yemenis face starvation deliberately imposed by a grotesque and obscenely rich monarchy.

The Yemeni resistance fighters, driven out of the major cities, are preparing for prolonged guerrilla warfare against the Saudi monsters and their puppets. Their resistance has already spread across the frontiers of the absolutist Saudi dictatorship.

The brutal Israeli occupation troops, in collaboration with armed 'settler' colonists, have accelerated their violent seizure of Palestinian lands. They have stepped up the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, Bedouins, Druze and Christian inhabitants replacing their communities with racist 'Jews-only' colonial settlements.

Daily assaults against the huge 'concentration camps' of Gaza accompany an armed blockade of land, air and water, preventing the reconstruction of the tens of thousands of homes, schools, hospital, factories and infrastructure, destroyed by last year's Israeli blitzkrieg.

Israel's continued annexation and ethnic cleansing of Palestinian territory precludes any diplomatic process; colonial wars have been and continue to be Israel's policy of choice in dealing with its Arab neighbors and captive populations.

Africa's wars, resulting from earlier US-EU interventions, continue to ravage-the Continent. Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, Libya are riven by bloody conflicts between US-EU backed regimes and armed Islamic and nationalist resistance movements.

Throughout North and Sub-Sahara Africa, US-EU backed regimes have provoked armed upheavals in Libya, Nigeria (Boko Haram), Egypt (ISIS, Moslem Brotherhood et al), Chad,

Niger, South Sudan, Somalia and elsewhere.

Imperial client Egyptian and Ethiopian dictators rule with iron fists – financed and armed by their EU and US sponsors.

Imperial wars rage throughout the Middle East and South Asia. Hundreds of experienced Baathist Iraqi military officers, who had been expelled or jailed and tortured by the US Occupation army, have now made common cause with Islamist fighters to form ISIS and effectively occupy a third of Iraq and a strategic swath of Syria.

There are daily bombings in Baghdad undermining its US client. Strategic advances by ISIS are forcing the US to resume and escalate its direct **combat role**



The US-Baghdad retreat and the defeat of the US-trained Iraqi military in the face of the Baathist-Islamist offensive is the opening salvo of a long-term, large-scale war in Iraq and Syria. The Turkish air-war against the Kurds in Iraq will escalate the war in Northern Iraq and extend it into southeast Turkey.

Closer to ‘home’, the EU-US-backed coup (‘regime change’) in Kiev and the attempt to impose dictatorial-pro-West oligarchic rule in Ukraine have detonated a prolonged civil-national war devastating the country and pitting NATO’s proxies against Russian-backed allies in the Donbas.

US, England, Poland and other NATO powers are deeply committed to pushing war right up to Russia’s borders.

There is a new Cold War, with the imposition of wide-ranging US-EU economic sanctions against Russia and the organizing of major NATO military exercises on Russia’s doorsteps. It is no surprise that these provocations are met with a major counter-response – the Russian military build-up. The NATO power grab in Ukraine, which first led to a local ethnic war, now escalates to a global confrontation and may move toward a nuclear confrontation as Russia absorbs hundreds of thousands of refugees from the slaughter in Ukraine.

The US puppet regime in Afghanistan has faced a major advance of the Taliban in all regions, including the capital, Kabul.

The Afghan war is intensifying and the US-backed Kabul regime is in retreat. US troops can scarcely advance beyond their bunkers.

As the Taliban military advances, its leaders demand total surrender of the Kabul puppets and the withdrawal of US troops. The US response will be a prolonged escalation of war.

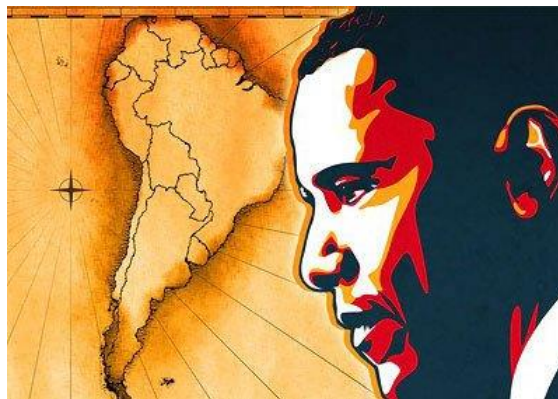
Pakistan, bristling with US arms, faces a major conflict along its borders with India and permanent war in its semi-autonomous Northwest frontier states with Islamist and ethnic Pashtu guerrilla movements backed by mass regional political parties. These parties exercise *de facto* control over the Northwest region providing sanctuary and arms for Taliban militants operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Armed ethno-religious conflicts persist in western China, Myanmar and northern India. There are large-scale popular resistance movements in the militant northeast Thailand opposed to the current military-monarchist dictatorship in Bangkok.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in South and Southeast Asia, as in the rest of the world, war and armed conflicts have become central in resolving ethnic, social, tribal and regional differences with central states: diplomacy and democratic elections have been rendered obsolete and inefficient.

### **Latin America – On the Verge**

Burgeoning violent extra-parliamentary right-wing movements, intent on overthrowing or ‘impeaching’ elected center-left Latin American governments face major confrontations with the state and its mass supporters.



In Ecuador, Venezuela and Brazil, US-backed opposition groups are engaged in violent

demonstrations, directed toward ousting the elected regimes. In the case of Ecuador, '*popular sectors*', including some indigenous leaders and sectors of the trade union movement, have called for an '*uprising*' to oust President Correa. They seem oblivious of the fact that the *hard-right oligarchs* who now control key offices in the three principal cities (Guayaquil, Quito and Cuenca) will be the real beneficiaries of their '*uprisings*'.

The resurgent Right envisions violent '*regime change*' as the first step toward '*wiping the slate clean*' of a decade of social reforms, independent regional organizations and independent foreign policies.

'*Civil war*' may be too strong a word for the situation in Latin America at this time – but this is the direction which the US-backed opposition is heading. Faced with the mess and difficulty of dislodging incumbent regimes via elections, the US and its local proxies have opted for the choreography of street violence, sabotage, martial law and coups – to be followed by *sanitized* elections – with US-vetted candidates.

War and violence run rampant through Mexico and most of Central America. A US-backed military coup ousted the popularly elected, independent President Zelaya in Honduras. The ensuing US-proxy regime has murdered and jailed hundreds of pro-democracy dissidents and driven thousands to flee the violence.

The 1990's US-brokered '*Peace Accords*' in El Salvador and Guatemala effectively blocked any agrarian reform and income redistribution that might have led to the rebuilding of their civil societies. This has led to over two decades of mass disaffection, the rise of armed '*gangs*' numbering over 100,000 members and an average of six to ten thousand homicides a year with El Salvador becoming the '*murder capital of the hemisphere*' on a per capita basis. The annual murder toll under the US-brokered '*Peace Accords*' now exceeds those killed each year during the civil war.

The real '*carnage capital*' of the hemisphere is Mexico. Over 100,000 people have been murdered during the decade-long, US-backed '*war on drugs*' – a war which has become a state-sponsored war on the Mexican people.

The internal war has allowed the Mexican government to privatize and sell the crown jewels of the national economy – the petroleum industry. While thousands of Mexicans are terrorized and slaughtered, the US and EU oil companies are curiously shielded from the drug lords. The same Mexican government, its police, officials and military, who collaborate with the drug lords in dividing up the billions of drug dollars, protect foreign oil companies and their executives. After all, narco-dollars are laundered by banks in New York, Miami, Los Angeles and London to help fuel the speculation!

## **From Regional to Nuclear Wars**

Regional and local wars spread under the shadow of a looming world war. The US moves its



arms, planes, bases and operations to the Russian and Chinese borders.

Never have so many US troops and war planes been placed in so many strategic locations, often less than an hour drive from major Russian cities.

Not even during the height of the Cold War, did the US impose so many economic sanctions against Russian enterprises.

In Asia, Washington is organizing major trade, military and diplomatic treaties designed to exclude and undermine China's growth as a trade competitor. It is engaged in provocative activities comparable to the boycott and blockade of Japan which led to the Second World War in Asia.

Open '*warfare by proxy*' in Ukraine is perhaps the first salvo of the Third World War in Europe. The US-EU-sponsored coup in Kiev has led to the annexation of Western Ukraine. In response to the threat of violence toward the ethnic Russian majority in Crimea and the loss of its strategic naval base on the Black Sea, Russia annexed Crimea.

In the lead-up to the Second World War, Germany annexed Austria. In a similar manner the US-EU installed a puppet regime in Kiev by violent putsch as its own initial steps toward major power grabs in Central Asia. The military build-up includes the placement of major, forward offensive military bases in Poland.

Warsaw's newly elected hard-right regime of President Andrzej Duda has demanded that Poland become NATO's central military base of operation and the front line in a war against Russia.

### **Wars and More Wars and the Never-ending Torrents of Refugees**

The US and EU imperial wars have devastated the lives and livelihoods of scores of millions of people in South Asia, North and Sub-Sahara Africa, Central America, Mexico, the Balkans and now Ukraine.

Four million Syrian refugees have joined millions of Afghan, Pakistani, Iraqi, Yemeni, Somali, Libyan, Palestinian and Sudanese refugees fleeing US-EU bombs, drones and proxy mercenaries ravaging their countries.

Millions of war refugees escape toward safety in Western Europe, joining the millions of economic refugees who have fled free market destitution in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, the Balkans and other EU satellites.

Panic among the civilian population of Western Europe sets in as hundreds of thousands cross the Mediterranean, the Aegean and the Balkans.

Droves of refugees perish each day. Tens of thousands crowd detention centers. Local labor

markets are saturated. Social services are overwhelmed.

The US builds walls and detention camps for the millions trying to escape the harsh consequences of imperial-centered free markets in Mexico, narco-terror and the fraudulent 'peace accord'-induced violence in Central America.

As Western wars advance, the desperate refugees multiply. The poor and destitute clamber at the gates of the imperial heartland crying: *'Your bombs and your destruction of our homelands have driven us here, now you must deal with us in your homeland'*.



*Fomenting class war* between the refugees and 'natives' of the imperial West – may not be on the agenda . . . for now, but the future for 'civil' society in Europe and the US is bleak.

Meanwhile, more and even bigger wars are on the horizon and additional millions of civilians will be uprooted and face the choice of starving, fleeing with their families or fighting the empire. The ranks of seasoned and infuriated resistance fighters are swelling in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Ukraine and elsewhere.

The US and EU are becoming armed fortresses. US police deal with the marginalized citizenry as an occupying army, assaulting African-Americans, immigrants and dissidents – while looting poor communities . . . and protecting the rich...

## **Conclusion**

War is everywhere and expanding: No continent or region, big or small, is free from the contagion of war.

Imperial wars have spawn local wars . . . igniting mass flights in a never-ending cycle. There are no real diplomatic success stories! There are no enduring, viable peace accords!

Some pundits may protest this analysis: They point to the recent US – Cuba rapprochement as a 'success'. They conveniently forget that the US is still subverting Cuba's biggest trading



partner, Venezuela; that Washington's major regional proxies are demanding regime change among Cuba's allies in Ecuador, Brazil and Bolivia and that Washington is increasingly threatening Cuba's alternative markets in Russia and China. The vision of the US flag flapping in the breeze outside its embassy in Havana does little to cover Washington's iron fist threatening Cuba's allies.

Others cite the US – Iran peace accord as a major '*success*'. They ignore that the US is backing the bloody Saudi invasion of neighboring Yemen and the massacre of Shiite communities; that the US has provided Israel with a road map detailing Iran's entire defense system and that the US and EU are bombing Iran's Syrian ally without mercy.

As for the US – Cuba and Iranian agreements– are they enduring and strategic or just tactical imperial moves preparing for even greater assaults?

The war epidemic is not receding.

War refugees are still fleeing; they have no homes or communities left.

Disorder and destruction are increasing, not decreasing; there is no rebuilding the shattered societies, not in Gaza, not in Fallujah, not in the Donbas, not in Guerrero, not in Aleppo.

Europe feels the tremors of a major conflagration.

Americans still believe that the two oceans will protect them. They are told that placing NATO missiles on Russia's borders and stationing warships off China's shores and building electrified walls and laying barbed wire along the Rio Grande will protect them. Such is their faith in their political leaders and propagandists.

What a packet of lies! Inter-continental missiles can 'rain down' on New York, Washington and Los Angeles.

It is time to wake up!

It is time to stop the US – EU headlong race to World War III!

Where to start? Libya has been irrevocably destroyed; it is too late there! Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan are aflame. We are being plunged deeper into war while being told we are withdrawing! Ukraine sucks in more guns and more troops!

Can we really have peace with Iran if we cannot control our own government as it dances to the Israelis tune? And Israel insists on war – our waging war for them! As the Israeli war criminal General and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon once told some worried American Zionists: "*Trouble with the US? We lead them by the nose...!*"

Just look at the terrified families fleeing carnage in the Middle East or Mexico.

*What is to be done?*

*When will we cut our losses and shake off the bonds of these war makers – foreign and domestic?*