



\*\*\*\*\*  
**Australia-Cuba Friendship Society**  
**Melbourne NEWSLETTER**  
**September 2019**  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Next Meeting**  
**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**September**  
7.30pm  
Unitarian Church  
110 Grey St,  
East Melbourne

Melbourne	Sydney	Perth	Brisbane	Canberra	Hobart	Adelaide	Central Coast	NSW/Vic Sthn Border	New Zealand
PO Box 1051 Collingwood Vic. 3066	PO Box k364 Haymarket NSW 1240	PO Box 1455 South Perth WA 6951	PO Box 5683 West End Qld 4101	PO Box 6139 Kingston ACT 2604	GPO Box 323 Hobart Tas. 7001	Box 381 N. Adelaide SA 5006	PO Box 1082 Gosford NSW 2250	PO Box 854 Albury NSW 2640	220a Adelaide Rd Newtown Wellington New Zealand

Dear Comrades

12 August 2019

By the time you get this editorial, I will still be in Thailand dodging dengue fever mozzies, cobras and giant spiders, so everything I write could be hopelessly out of date. Although on reflection, it's more likely that things will be even worse than they are now, but one thing's for certain, we're ruled by dangerous cretins, and that includes the dill from our Reserve Bank who's managing to further screw up the already bugged-up economic system that we're stuck with. And that takes talent. By the time he's through, the best place to park your money - if you've still got any - is under the mattress. We've certainly got plenty to think about in this crackpot world.

The US-led NATO alliance has designated a whole new hemisphere for its activities. No longer just an 'Atlantic' outfit, it's now policing our neck of the woods, the Pacific, naturally to counter the shrill warnings about the 'rise of China'. NATO chieftain Jens Stoltenberg stated: *'this is not about 'the need' to deploy military forces into the Pacific, but is about responding to the fact that China is coming closer to us'*, an interesting geographical phenomenon! In the interests of balance, are Chinese warships patrolling European waterways? And are Chinese missile systems being established near America's borders? No. But as far as NATO's Washington lackey is concerned, China's legitimate development as an economic power is a malign security threat and must be countered.

Right from its inception in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has been a European cover for American imperialism, a stalking horse for US aggression towards the Soviet Union, and latterly, the Russian Federation. It should have bit the dust decades ago with the official end of the Cold War in 1991. Instead, it has doubled in size to now include some 29 member states, while expanding its flunkey role to match the unhinged narrative coming from the Trump White House. The out-of-control warmongering towards the rest of the world by Washington is flagrant and audacious and should be challenged, not supported by toadies like Stoltenberg. In the richter scale of threats to world peace, the US is way out in front.

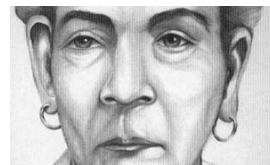
Someone remarked that while whistleblowers are gaoled, journalists' homes are raided, public servants are sacked and fined for speaking out against government policies, unions are being busted, wage theft and exploitation of the vulnerable abound, we are assailed with headlines from a gungho militaristic goose who has the gall to compare China with Nazi Germany. And speaking of whistleblowers, we must maintain our support for Julian Assange whose health is rapidly deteriorating, not surprising considering he is isolated, medicated up to the eyeballs, and treated worse than a murderer

John Pilger said this a few years ago which puts everything in a nutshell: *'Democracy has become a business plan, with a bottom line for every human activity, every dream, every decency, every hope. The main parliamentary parties are now devoted to the same economic policies - socialism for the rich, capitalism for the poor - and the same foreign policy of servility to make endless war. This is not democracy. It is to politics what McDonalds is to food.'* Viva!

**Joan Coxsedge, Commentator-in-Chief, ACFS Melbourne (03) 9857**

## **[Mother Cuba](#)**

The Federation of Cuban Women, which has placed Cuban women in the center of the Revolution, today celebrates its 59th anniversary. Granma presents a tribute to all women, and to Cuba



## **[Revolutionizing our thinking about employment issues](#)**

A total of 57 measures to be implemented immediately, in the short and medium term, proposed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and the University of Havana's Economics Department were recently evaluated by Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, during a review of employment programs



## **[Efficient production on every inch of land](#)**

During a visit to the province of Artemisa, Party Second Secretary José Ramón Machado Ventura interacted with farmers and agricultural leaders



## **[New processing centers for export tobacco inaugurated](#)**

The new facilities are located in the municipalities of Pinar del Río, San Juan y Martínez, and San Luis, the first of eight to be opened before the end of 2019, to prepare raw tobacco for export

## **[No deaths of infants, school age children, or mothers reported in Granma's mountains](#)**



Cuba ensures comprehensive medical attention to the population of mountainous areas, and especially children and mothers

## **[Canada restores a portion of its embassy services in Cuba](#)**

Despite the return of some services, all active applications were transferred from Havana to Mexico City



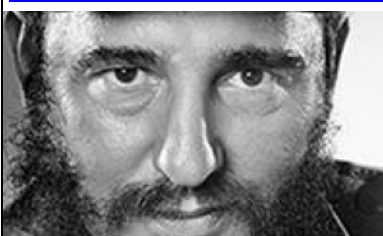
## **EMPLOYMENT AND THE AGING POPULATION**

### **[Industry 4.0 coming soon](#)**

Industry 4.0 is automated, digitized, computerized, highly developed industry with few workers and highly productive results - an opportunity and challenge for Cuba



## **[Fidel, the most visionary Cuban of the 20th century](#)**



On the occasion of the anniversary of Fidel's birth, Granma shares excerpts from a speech by First Party Secretary Raúl Castro Ruz, December 3, 2016

## **[Salvador Valdés visits the province of Artemisa](#)**

Salvador Valdés Mesa, first vice president of the Councils of State and Ministers, began a working visit to the province of Artemisa to verify the status of agricultural production, the plans for the upcoming cold season, and supplies available to the population



# Addressing deterioration of roads and highways

*President Miguel Díaz-Canel again calls for taking advantage of resources available within the country to improve highway infrastructure, in less than optimal condition*

Author: [National news staff](#) | [informacion@granma.cu](mailto:informacion@granma.cu) - august 6, 2019 09:08:32



**Photo:** Jorge Luis Merencio

The necessity of making use of technology available within the country to maintain and repair roads, to prevent further deterioration, including possible local strategies that can be implemented on short order, allowing communities to address their own issues, was a key point made by the President during a recent meeting to evaluate the country's highway program.

The Presidential website reported that, at the end of 2018, more than 9,800 kilometers of roads had received maintenance, although this is insufficient to meet needs, thus the importance of seeking other means to do things differently.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel again called for taking advantage of resources available within the country to improve highway infrastructure, in less than optimal condition.

Raúl Díaz Guadarrama, director of the National Road Center, explained that to control road deterioration, provincial entities must carry out essential maintenance such as the restoration of ditches, and clearing of storm sewers.

He stressed that at the end of last year important projects were concluded such as the bridge over the Toa River, in the Guantanamo municipality of Baracoa, while in the province of Sancti Spíritus, the Zaza River bridge was rebuilt, after suffering heavy damage caused by intense rains associated with tropical storm Alberto.

In Context:

The country's entire network of roads covers 71,138.5km, of which 10,997.8 km are of national interest, 2 303.4km of provincial interest, 32,245km of municipal interest, and 25,592.3 km of specific interest. This total includes 17,167.9 km of urban roads, which are mostly classified as of municipal interest and some 24,000 km classified as of specific interest, mostly affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture or the sugar industry. A total of 5,862 bridges are available, of which 3,620 are located on roads of national interest, 480 on those of provincial interest, 1,140 on those of municipal interest, and 622 on those of specific interest. Some 24% of these roads are considered in good condition, 37% evaluated as acceptable, and 39% in poor condition.

<http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2019-08-06/addressing-deterioration-of-roads-and-highways>



# Produce more, and better

*The importance of applying science and technology in national industry investments, to allow for progress toward a sustainable, prosperous society, was reaffirmed during President Díaz-Canel's policy implementation review meetings*

Author: [National news staff](#) | [informacion@granma.cu](mailto:informacion@granma.cu) - august 1, 2019 10:08:23



**Photo:** Estudio Revolución

The vital importance of applying science and technology in national industry investments, to ensure present and future progress, was reiterated by the President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, during meetings to review the implementation of the national packaging and industrial development plans.

Once again, the President insisted on the necessity of strengthening collaboration between industry, universities, and research centers.

During the meeting, Comandante de la Revolución Ramiro Valdés Menéndez and the ministers of Industry and Food Industry, Alfredo López and Iris Quiñones, respectively, participated to analyze progress made on the directives emphasized by the President in previous reviews.

Among the issues evaluated in the context of the packaging policy was the comprehensive proposal to strengthen the national center dedicated to these productions, as well as the investment plan with a view to gradually replacing containers for products exported that are now imported, as explained on the Presidential website.

The magnitude of the task is made clear by the fact that the 480 exportable items identified require 2,782 types of packaging, of which 1,642 are made in Cuba and 1,140 imported. It was reported that in the last five years investments for more than 170 million pesos were made in the packaging industry, especially in plants based on the use of paper, plastic, and wood. The perspective through 2025 is to allocate an additional 280 million pesos. Notable growth in the reuse of glass, plastic, and metal containers was noted, and Díaz-Canel highlighted efforts made to learn about international trends in packaging, which have included exchanges between foreign experts and students at the José Antonio Echevarría University of Technology and the Industrial Design Institute.

<http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2019-08-01/produce-more-and-better>

# The United States government poses the most urgent threat of the last five decades to the region's peace and security

*Excerpts from speech delivered by Army General Raul Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Party Central Committee, April 10, 2019, on the occasion of the proclamation of the new Constitution, in the National Assembly of People's Power*

Author: [Raúl Castro Ruz](#) | [internet@granma.cu](mailto:internet@granma.cu) - august 7, 2019 15:08:26

During the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of Moncada, and January 1, this year, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution, I warned of the adverse panorama that was developing and the resurgence of our enemies' enthusiasm and rush to destroy the example of Cuba. On both occasions I reiterated the conviction that the empire's siege was tightening around Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba. The facts have confirmed that assessment.

The region that Martí called Our America has, in recent times, been able to strengthen regional independence, in a climate of peace, cooperation, and harmony among its member states.

With the precept of achieving unity within diversity, sustained progress was made towards integration, complementarity, and the agreement among all to solve the economic and social problems of our peoples.

Latin America and the Caribbean were declared a Zone of Peace and progress was also made in the goal of reaching a more respectful relationship with northern neighbors.

The scenario today is different. The current government of the United States, with its hegemonic ambitions for the region, poses the most urgent threat of the last five decades to the peace, security, and well-being of Latin America and the Caribbean.

In pursuit of establishing its domination, several coups were orchestrated over a number of years, in one case, a military one, and others of a parliamentary nature, to remove progressive Presidents from office, while the participation of leftist leaders in elections was prevented via media campaigns and malicious legal charges. Precisely, last Sunday, marked the end of the first year of compañero Inácio Lula da Silva's unjust incarceration, whose freedom we demand.

Unfortunately, there are governments and political forces that irresponsibly join imperialism in this war-like escalation.

<http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2019-08-07/the-united-states-government-poses-the-most-urgent-threat-of-the-last-five-decades-to-the-regions-peace-and-security>

The relentless siege of the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, using methods of unconventional warfare and economic strangulation, is the main target of aggression, but, the threat concerns us all.

The Venezuelan government and the Chavista people are writing admirable chapters of resistance. On Bolivarian soil, being defined today is whether Latin American and Caribbean nations have the right to self-determination, if sovereign power rests with the people or with a foreign government, if it is acceptable for a powerful country to determine the rulers of an independent state, if the rules and principles governing the United Nations have real value or are dead letter, if the peoples of the region will remain passive before the imposition of a sovereign power in a sister nation or respond to repudiate the crime.

We reaffirm, from this Parliament, our firm solidarity and support to the Bolivarian Chavista Revolution, President Nicolás Maduro Moros, and his people's civic-military union.

To the more than 20,000 Cuban collaborators, 61% of them women, who are fulfilling missions in Venezuela, I convey our deep appreciation for their commitment and consecration to the noble, deeply humanitarian task they perform in the service of families in this sister nation.

(Excerpts from speech delivered by Army General Raul Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Party Central Committee, April 10, 2019, on the occasion of the proclamation of the new Constitution, in the National Assembly of People's Power)



Photo: Granma Archives

# Iván Duque has no moral authority to talk about human rights in Venezuela

*In Colombia, at least 120 social leaders have been murdered in the last three months and 92 former FARC-EP guerrillas since the signing of the Peace Accords in Havana*

Author: [Elson Concepción Pérez](mailto:Elson Concepción Pérez) | [internet@granma.cu](mailto:internet@granma.cu) - July 31, 2019 12:07:27

Colombia is virtually immersed in a dirty war against the forces of the left in the country. At least 120 social leaders have been murdered in the last three months and 92 former FARC-EP guerrillas since the signing of the Peace Accords in Havana.

The President of Colombia, Iván Duque, traveled to Lima, Peru, to join the chorus and, once again, attack Venezuela, based on the report presented by Chilean Michelle Bachelet on the situation of human rights there.

A report from the newspaper **El Espectador**, highlights the following words of the Colombian president in Lima: "I hope that now with the results of Michelle Bachelet's report, the International Criminal Court (ICC) can quickly, not only open the investigation, but have strong evidence to proceed to trial, so a dictator who has finished off the Venezuelan people can get what he deserves.

And as generally happens with these characters, muttering to himself, he added: "I can speak with moral authority because I was the first, three years ago, to denounce Maduro before the ICC."

If I were to analyze his words, it would be enough to address the "moral authority" issue, but instead of inventing "motes" in the eyes of others, he should at least worry about the spiral of violence in his own country, where between January and November last year, 226 social leaders were killed.

Will the Colombian government do something to stop the massacre and support the Peace Accords with the former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC-EP), converted by the President's work and grace, into a meaningless document? What will be done about the murders of former FARC guerrillas?

The issue of land, the main demand of campesinos and their communal and social leaders, prioritized by the guerrillas and reflected in the Agreement, is one of the main pending tasks that the government of Colombia owes its people, but the President has forgotten this. Colombian campesinos have more than once asked President Duque to open a dialogue, to address the problem and stop the wave of lynchings, but he remains more concerned with the supposed "human rights situation in Venezuela" and ignores the demands of Colombians.

Do the deaths of social and communal leaders in the Colombian countryside have nothing to do with respect and protection of human rights in the nation?

<http://en.granma.cu/mundo/2019-07-31/ivan-duque-has-no-moral-authority-to-talk-about-human-rights-in-venezuela>



Jorge Corredor González, alias 'Wilson Saavedra', former FARC leader killed May 14, 2019, while eating lunch in a restaurant in Valle del Cauca. Photo: [www.lapatilla.com](http://www.lapatilla.com)



# Follow the money behind Hong Kong protests

Posted in [Asia](#), [Spotlight](#), [World](#) - By Sara Flounders - August 16, 2019

*The demonstrations in Hong Kong, now an open confrontation with the People's Republic of China, have a global impact. What are the forces behind this movement? What provides the funds and who stands to benefit?*

The increasingly violent demonstrations in Hong Kong are completely embraced and enthusiastically supported in the U.S. corporate media and all the imperialist political parties in the U.S. and Britain. This should be a danger sign to everyone fighting for change and for social progress. U.S. imperialism is never disinterested or neutral.

The disruptive actions involve helmeted and masked protesters using gasoline bombs, flaming bricks, arson and steel bars, random attacks on buses, and airport and mass transit shutdowns. Among the most provocative acts was an organized break-in at the Hong Kong legislature where “activists” vandalized the building and hung the British Union Jack flag.

U.S., British and Hong Kong’s colonial flags are prominent in these confrontations, along with defaced flags and other symbols of People’s China.

The New York Times described the airport shutdown: “The protests at the airport have been deeply tactical, as the largely leaderless movement strikes at a vital economic artery. Hong Kong International Airport, which opened in 1998, the year after China reclaimed the territory from Britain, serves as a gateway to the rest of Asia. Sleek and well run, the airport accommodates nearly 75 million passengers a year and handles more than 5.1 million metric tons of cargo.” (Aug. 14)

U.S. media have consistently labelled these violent actions “pro-democracy.” But are they?

Even if the leaders of these reactionary actions decide to pull back from the brink and recalibrate their tactics, based on the Chinese government’s strong warnings, it is important to understand a movement that has such strong U.S. support.

## China has a right to intervene

It must be strongly stated that China is not invading Hong Kong if it moves against these violent disruptions. Hong Kong is part of China. This is an internal matter, and the call for independence for Hong Kong is an open attack on China’s national sovereignty.

Under Hong Kong’s Basic Law, the constitution for the city, the government is legally allowed to request help from the Chinese People’s Liberation Army.

The Chinese government has announced that it will intervene militarily to defend China’s sovereignty. Top govern-



Protests in Hong Kong routinely carry the US flag and photos of Donald Trump

ment officials have labelled the most extreme acts as “terrorism” and denounced U.S. support. Several times officials raised the analogy to the Western “color revolutions” that violently overturned governments in Serbia, Ukraine, Libya and Haiti and were attempted in Venezuela and Syria.

“The ideologues in Western governments never cease in their efforts to engineer unrest against governments that are not to their liking, even though their actions have caused misery and chaos in country after country in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Now they are trying the same trick in China,” China Daily explained on July 3.

Liu Xiaoming, China’s ambassador to Britain, told reporters that their country was still acting as Hong Kong’s colonial master. (nbcnews.com, July 4)

“A spokeswoman for China’s Foreign Ministry claimed Tuesday that recent comments from American lawmakers Pelosi (D-Ca.) and McConnell (R-Ky.) demonstrate that Washington’s real goal is to incite chaos in the city,” according to CNBC. “By neglecting and distorting the truth, they whitewashed violent crimes as a struggle for human rights and freedom” (Aug. 14)

## Where is U.S. support for other resistance?

Hong Kong police are denounced in the U.S. media for violence, but actually have shown great restraint. Despite months of violent confrontations, with flaming bottles constantly thrown, no one has been killed.

There is no such favourable media coverage or support from U.S. politicians for demonstrations of desperate workers and peasants in Honduras, Haiti or the Philippines, or for the yellow vest movement in France. There is never an official condemnation when demonstrators are killed in Yemen or Kashmir or in weekly demonstrations in Gaza against Israeli occupation.

These struggles receive barely a mention, although in every case scores of people have been killed by police, targeted for assassination or disappeared.

While Hong Kong protests receive widespread attention, there is no similar coverage of or political support for Black Lives Matter demonstrations in the U.S. or the masses protesting racist Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids and roundups of migrants.

### **U.S. pressure continues**

Despite China's warnings of possible martial law, strict curfews and military intervention to restore order, protesters have shown no signs of retreat. The U.S. and Britain are determined to propel forward those hostile political forces they have cultivated over the past two decades.

The escalating demonstrations are linked to the U.S. trade war, tariffs and military encirclement of China. Four hundred — half — of the 800 U.S. overseas military bases surround China. Aircraft carriers, destroyers, nuclear submarines, jet aircraft, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile batteries, and satellite surveillance infrastructures are positioned in the South China Sea, close to Hong Kong. Media demonization is needed to justify and intensify this military presence.

Encouraging the demonstrations goes hand-in-hand with international efforts to bar Huawei 5G technology, the cancellation of a joint study of cancer and the arrest of Chinese corporate officers. All these belligerent acts are designed to exert maximum pressure on China, divide the leadership, destabilize economic development and weaken China's resolve to maintain any socialist planning.

Martial law in Hong Kong, a major financial center, especially for international investment funds coming into China, would impact China's development.

### **Capitalist economic “freedom”**

British imperialism, in the 155 years it ruled Hong Kong, denied rights to millions of workers. There was no elected government, no right to a minimum wage, unions, decent housing or health care, and certainly no freedom of the press or freedom of speech. These basic democratic rights were not even on the books in colonial Hong Kong.

For the past 25 years, including this year, Hong Kong has been ranked No. 1 in the right-wing Heritage Foundation's list of countries with the “greatest economic freedom” — meaning the least restraints on capitalist profit taking. Hong Kong's ranking is based on low taxes and light regulations, the strongest property rights and business freedom, and “openness to global commerce and vibrant entrepreneurial climate ... no restrictions on foreign banks.” For this Hong Kong is the “freest society in the world.”

This “freedom” means the world's highest rents and the greatest gap between the super-rich and the desperately poor and homeless. This is what Hong Kong youth face today. But the youth are consciously being misdirected to blame the city administration for the conditions Hong Kong is locked into under the “One Country, Two Systems agreement.”

### **An unequal colonial treaty**

Hong Kong is stolen land. This spectacular deep water port in the South China Sea at the mouth of the Pearl River, a major waterway in south China, was seized by Britain in the 1842 Opium Wars. After negotiations with Britain had dragged on through the 1980s, the British imposed another unequal treaty on the People's Republic of China.

Under the 1997 “One Country, Two Systems” agreement that officially returned Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories to the PRC, Britain and China agreed to leave “the previous capitalist system” in place for 50 years.

China, determined to reassert its sovereignty over land stolen by imperialist invasion, also needed funds for development. Most money in Asia moved through the Hong Kong banking system. So in 1997 China was anxious to reach a smooth transition that would not destabilize the transfer of investment funds into the 99.5 percent of China that had previously been denied development funds. Since the victorious Chinese Revolution in 1949, China had been sanctioned and blockaded from accessing Western investment and technology.

U.S. and British imperialism took full advantage of the 1997 concession that maintained their economic control of the former colony. Their hope was that Hong Kong could serve, as it had in the past, as an economic battering ram into China.

Their hopes were not realized. In 1997 Hong Kong's gross domestic product was 27 percent of China's gross domestic product. It is now a mere 3 percent and falling. Much to U.S. and British frustration, the world's largest banks are now in China and they are state-owned banks.

What confounds the capitalist class, far more than China's incredible growth, is that the top 12 Chinese companies on U.S. Fortune 500 list are all state-owned and state-subsidized. They include massive oil, solar energy, telecommunications, engineering and construction companies, banks and the auto industry. ([Fortune.com](https://www.fortune.com), July 22, 2015)

U.S. corporate power is deeply threatened by China's level of development through the Belt and Road Initiative and its growing position in international trade and investment.

### **U.S., Britain built a network of collaborators**

When Britain and China signed the One Country, Two Systems agreement, all foreign intervention and colonial claims on Hong Kong were supposed to end. Full sovereignty was to return to China.

However, U.S. and British efforts to undercut Hong Kong's return began in advance of the signing. Just before the transfer of sovereignty, Britain hastily set up, after 150 years of appointed officials, a partially elected, although still mainly appointed, government. They quickly established and funded political parties, composed of their loyal collaborators.

Millions of dollars were openly and secretly funnelled into a whole network of protected social service organizations, political parties, media and social media, student and youth organizations, and labor unions established to undercut support for China and the Communist Party of China.



The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions receives U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funding, along with British support. It promotes “pro-democracy, independent unions” throughout China. The HKCTU was established in 1990 to counter and undercut the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions founded in 1948, which is still the largest union organization with 410,000 members.

The HKFTU suffered years of brutal repression under British colonial rule as it fought for basic protection of workers’ rights. A strike organized by the HKFTU shook British colonial rule in 1967. The strike became a citywide rebellion sparked by mass layoffs of workers from the plastic flower factory. British colonial authorities harshly suppressed the uprising, resulting in 51 deaths and hundreds injured and disappeared. The HKFTU supports China and opposes the reactionary demonstrations.

### **NED funding = CIA support**

Allen Weinstein, a founder of the NED, told the Washington Post in 1991, “A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA.” (Sept. 21, 1991) The NED funds, coordinates and weaponizes nongovernmental organizations and social organizations with the capacity to put tens of thousands of misdirected, idealistic and alienated youth on the streets.

Funding from the NED, the Ford, Rockefeller, Soros and numerous other corporate foundations, christian churches of every denomination, and generous British funding, is behind this hostile, subversive network orchestrating the Hong Kong protests.

The NED bankrolls the Hong Kong Human Rights Movement, the Hong Kong Journalists Association, the Civic Party, Labor Party and Democratic Party. They are members of the Civil Human Rights Front that coordinates the demonstrations.

This role of the NED in China is increasingly harder to obscure. Alexander Rubinstein reported in “American Gov’t, NGOs Fuel and Fund Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Protests” (mintpressnews.com, June 13): “It is inconceivable that the organizers of the protests are unaware of the NED ties to some of its members.” (tinyurl.com/y6nhmapz)

The goal is to promote a hostile and suspicious attitude toward China and toward communism and to foster the false concept of a past democratic Hong Kong with a distinct identity. China Daily warns: “In recent years, there have been warnings that color revolutions are emerging as a new form of warfare employed by the West to destabilize certain countries.” (Aug. 12)

### **Which system works better?**

The Aug. 13 New York Times refers to Hong Kong as a “bastion of civil liberties” to counter “Beijing’s brand of authoritarianism.”

British colonial past is deeply mythologized. Twenty-two years of constant nostalgia for this past, supposedly glorious time has influenced increasingly impoverished youth.

Despite decades of multimillion-dollar Western funding, Hong Kong has a poverty rate of 20 percent (23.1 percent for children) compared to less than 1 percent in mainland China. In the past 20 years, mainland China has lifted countless millions of people out of poverty

Just across the river from Hong Kong sits the city of Shenzhen. It is one of the Special Economic Zones established to lure Western technology. These zones, originally with thousands of labor-intensive factories and millions of workers earning low wages, were centers of capitalist exploitation and enormous profits for U.S. and other global capitalists.

Shenzhen grew from a city of 30,000 in 1979 to a megacity of 20 million, with the largest migrant population in China. Shenzhen had a population three times the size of Hong Kong. With investments via Hong Kong, this new city became a massive polluted factory town with sweatshops spewing out clouds of dark toxic smoke.

In the past five years, through city and national urban planning, Shenzhen is today one of the most livable cities in China, with extensive parks, tree-lined streets and the largest fleet of electric buses in the world (16,000), along with all-electric cabs. Shenzhen aims to have 80 percent of its new buildings green-certified by 2020. It is full of apartment blocks, office towers and modern factories with advanced equipment manufacturing, robotics, automation and giant tech startups.

For the last 10 years wages have been stagnant in Hong Kong while rents have increased 300 percent; it is the most expensive city in the world. In Shenzhen, wages have increased 8 percent every year, and more than 1 million new, public, green housing units at low rates are nearing completion.

The U.S. is demanding that China abandon state support of its industries, the ownership of its banks and national planning. But contrasting the decay, growing poverty and intense alienation in Hong Kong with the green vibrant city of Shenzhen across the river shows that there are two choices for China today, including the angry forces mobilized in Hong Kong: modern socialist planning or a return to the super-exploitation and imperialist domination of the colonial past.

For decades Britain and the U.S. used the people of Hong Kong for cheap labor. Now they are using the same population for cheap political propaganda. This cynical maneuver is just one more weapon in a desperate effort to disrupt China’s further development.

U.S. corporate power is incapable of meeting any of the desperate needs for housing, health care, education and a healthy environment for people here. Instead, in a relentless drive for profits, enormous resources are squandered on militarism to threaten countries around the world.

**We must demand: U.S. Hands Off China! U.S. Out of Hong Kong!**

<https://iacenter.org/2019/08/18/whats-behind-hong-kong-protests/>

# China...No to war!

The US has launched a new arms race. Australia is caught up in the middle of it and could be a target if the US launches an attack on the People's Republic of China (PRC). It is not too late to stop Australia's involvement in the US's war plans and work towards harmonious relations with the China. But it will take a courageous government backed by a mass, anti-war movement to defy the demands of US imperialism.

For some years now the Australian and US governments have been preparing for war against China. References to China as the target in the 2014 and 2016 defence white papers were implied, rather than explicitly stated. However, there was no doubt who the main target was. Now the language has changed, China is directly referred to as a threat and war is openly mentioned.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the world had watched China for too long without acting. Meaning what? In the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East tensions are high. A direct, counter-revolutionary challenge is being made to China's sovereignty, in particular the internationally recognised sovereignty of One China, Two Systems is under attack. This is the aim of the external and internal forces behind the upheaval in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The Australian government, the Labor Opposition and the corporate media have not let up in recent years demonising China, in a new Cold War. There is a real danger now of it escalating into a Hot War, not just with live fire but with nuclear weapons. No one wins a nuclear war. Trump is delusional if he thinks he can.

More recent use of terms such "authoritarian states", "foreign interference", cyber attacks, and the legislation on foreign interference and foreign political donations is all primarily aimed at China as well as Russia. Now, the government has joined the media with all out language of war as well as direct references to China as the threat.

**New arms race**

Military spending has been quarantined from budgets and is set to increase to an astronomical \$1 trillion over 20 years in line with instructions from the US at the time of President Obama. Recent developments suggest that this could rise to even more obscene heights, while the unemployed continue to starve on \$40 a day.

Earlier this month, the US tore up the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty with Moscow. The then US and Soviet leaders, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, signed the INF treaty in 1987. Its aim was to eliminate the presence of land-based

nuclear missiles and medium-range arsenals between 500km and 5,500km from Europe. Following his election, US President Trump announced his desire to increase the US's arsenal of nuclear weapons. One of the barriers to this was the INF Treaty.

Trump is reportedly pushing for a sale of F-16 fighters to Taiwan worth US\$8 billion, further adding to tensions.

"The sale of F-16s to Taiwan sends a strong message about the US commitment to security and democracy in the Indo-Pacific," the chairman and ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee said on Friday August 9.

Taiwan is ruled by descendants of anti-communist Chinese nationalists who lost the civil war in 1949 and sought refuge on the island under US protection. It was recognised as the Republic of China until 1971, when the UN recognised Beijing as the only legitimate Chinese government. Fearing an invasion from the mainland, Taiwan has been on a weapons buying spree from the US, with a US\$2.2 billion purchase of over 100 M1A2T Abrams tanks and portable air defence missiles approved last month.

A Pentagon draft Nuclear Posture Review that was leaked in January 2018 by Huffington Post, sought to add two new nuclear weapons to the American arsenal that would "significantly lower the threshold for nuclear use". In particular, the review called for the development of new, so-called low-yield nuclear weapons.

The US had, at that time, more than 1,000 nuclear warheads with low yield options! It also had 4,000 nuclear weapons in its active stockpile, which is more than enough to destroy the world many times over.

One nuclear weapon is one too many.

The US military are about to begin a program of building and testing new, previously banned missiles now that they are no longer bound by the INF Treaty.

The US is also planning to deploy land-based missiles in the Asia-Pacific region. At present the Australian government has not given the go ahead for them to be located in Australia.

**Australia a target?**

In any war that Australia is involved in against China, there is the possibility of Australia being targeted. There are more than 60 US military bases and facilities in Australia. The spy and communications station at Pine Gap in central Australia is critical to US operations.

There is talk that if any of these land-based missiles are deployed in Australia, they might be based near RAAF Tindal, 320km south-west of Darwin. From there, the US's

long-range missiles could reach the South China Sea and well into the east of China's land mass.

Malcolm Davis, senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, said that China already had the capacity to knock out Pine Gap and Tindal.

"They're not going to let the US operate from northern Australia unmolested so we have to accept the reality that in war with China we will be hit by the Chinese directly. That's reality," Davis said.

Australia already hosts 2,500 US marines on a permanent, rotational basis in Darwin. Australian forces train with them under US command.

**Middle East**

Not unconnected to the tensions surrounding China are developments in the Middle East where tankers have been hijacked and attacked. Trump had pulled the pin on the nuclear agreement with Iran. Several British tankers were captured and there was a drone incident, all contributing to what has become a dangerous flashpoint.

The US responded by setting up Operation Sentinel that it expects its allies to join. The European countries are not rushing to join, believing that the US brought this on itself by pulling out of the agreement before it expired.

According to US Central Command, Operation Sentinel will "promote maritime stability, ensure safe passage, and de-escalate tensions in international waters throughout the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait (BAM) and the Gulf of Oman."

It might also lead to US attempts to occupy Iran – another trail of death and destruction and another war it cannot win.

**Economic context**

These developments have been occurring to the backdrop of a global economy that is showing all the signs of an impending crisis. The US's senseless trade war against China is being felt around the globe, including in the US.

In particular the US's imposition of tariffs on China could have serious repercussions for Australia if they are not lifted. The tariffs are also hurting the US economy as China retaliates with its own tariffs.

China surprised the US government by a devaluation of its currency. Devaluation makes China's exports cheaper in the US, countering the impact of tariffs. At the same time, US's exports to China will become more expensive. The amount of devaluation was small, possibly meant as a warning.

US pressure on anyone doing business with Iran is also aimed at Beijing.

China has a trump (apologies for the pun) card up its sleeve: it could reek havoc by dumping sum or all of the US\$1.4 trillion worth of US Treasury bills it currently owns. Such action could bring global stock markets crashing down and trigger a financial crisis, possibly far more serious than the 2007-08 crisis.

In the past, China has said that it does not aim to hurt the US economy, but the tensions and pressures are mounting. Perhaps the most important is that of China's sovereignty which is not negotiable.

War a way out of crises

More seriously, the US's pursuit for global economic and military hegemony is facing difficulties. China's economic growth has been more rapid than the US estimated and the level and speed of its military modernisation also caught the US by surprise. The US faces challenges as a declining economic power against the ascendancy of China and India. China with its Belt and Road Initiative and other investments and loans, has given considerable assistance to developing countries.

Imperialism has historically used war to lift itself out of deep economic crises. This was the case in the First and Second World Wars. For example, the Second World War lifted economies out of a state of crisis following the Great Depression that hit in 1929.

Nothing has changed. The military industrial complex is big business, with some of the highest rates of exploitation and profit in the world. If they are to continue producing and making profits, then their weapons and other material need to be used. It is also one of the worst polluters.

Relations strained

Liberal MP Andrew Hastie in an opinion piece in the Age and Sydney Morning Herald (08-08-2019) made reference to the French fighting the Nazis, which in essence amounted to a comparison between Hitler and Xi Jinping.

Hastie is the chair of Parliament's Joint Intelligence and Security Committee, and so could be seen as someone in touch with the thinking of our intelligence agencies.

He says that, "almost every strategic and economic question facing Australia in the coming decades will be refracted through the geopolitical competition of the US and the PRC." No thought of co-operation.

His article reflects the way Hastie looks at the world, through the eyes of a capitalist. It is very different to the approach based on cooperation, mutual benefit and sharing being advanced by President Xi Jinping.

"We strongly deplore the Australian federal MP Andrew Hastie's rhetoric," the Chinese Embassy said in a statement following Hastie's comments. "It goes against the world

trend of peace, cooperation and development. It is detrimental to China-Australian relations," the statement said.

As a result relations between Beijing and Canberra are further strained.

The Australian government is paranoid that China will move in and take over the Pacific Islands that it sees as Australia's stomping ground in its role as medium sized imperial power. But successive governments have taken these nations for granted, with the arrogance and racism of a colonial power. Australia's hand-outs ("aid") have mostly worked in the interests of Australian businesses, rather than the recipient countries.

But Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conduct at the recent Pacific Islands Forum did nothing to bring these small nations into the embrace of Australia. Quite the contrary. (See Editorial, page 2.) It was embarrassing to say the least, as Morrison thought he could buy them off with dollars when they were talking about their survival.

AUSMIN

Just what Australia's role will be in the new arms race is not clear at this point in time. Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne and Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds hosted Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Mark Esper on August 4 in Sydney for the 29th Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN).

They cemented Australia's role as US deputy sheriff in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. However, the important content from these talks is not publicly released, rather generalised statements about closer ties, etc.

Following AUSMIN, Esper said the US "is now in an era of great power competition. And our strategic competitors are China and Russia, principally in that order." The US sees Iran as a threat to both its and Israel's interests in the Middle East. Whereas China has strong ties with Russia and Iran. At present Australia has its economic foot in China and South East Asia, and its military foot in the US camp. The US is applying pressure to Australia to come down off the fence on the US side.

China is not our enemy. What has China ever done to hurt Australia? Without China Australia would have experienced a deep recession following the global financial crisis.

A war against China, apart from all the lives and damage it would cause, would not be in Australia's interests. Our economy would come crashing down, much of the war would be fought in regions that Australia relies on for shipping cargo.

Fascism and War

It is unacceptable that Australia supports a position whereby an array of US warships

can sail with impunity close to the Chinese coast and even worse that Australia joins the US in these types of threatening exercises. It is time for Australia to assert its sovereignty and independence, to stop playing the role of Deputy Sheriff for US imperialism.

The government passed legislation to allegedly remove foreign interference and influence but completely bypassed some of the main sources of political interference. The US is a foreign power too. The foreign military bases and the foreign spy/communications station at Pine Gap are not under Australia's control. They should be shut down. The high concentration of the Murdoch media and its reactionary politics is another example of foreign influence. In the 2013 elections it ran a front page saying "Kick this mob out", referring to Labor, and that is what the electorate did.

The economic problems facing workers, the resultant reactionary political developments and the growing threat of war require an urgent response by the working class and progressive people in every sphere – in the workplace and community, at the national level and with the building of links of international solidarity.

War has always been a hallmark of imperialism. Fascism is also a hallmark of imperialism when bourgeois democracy no longer serves its purpose giving the illusion of democracy and freedom.

The Communist Party of Australia calls on the Australian government to:

- refuse to participate in the US's military operations in the Middle East;
- refuse to host US missiles, war planes and military on Australia's shores;
- close Pine Gap and other US bases;
- recognise the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China;
- end its military alliance with the US;
- further develop trade, cultural and other relations with China on the basis of mutual benefit and equality;
- No new coal, phase out those which currently exist.

There is another path to fascism and war. It is socialism and peaceful coexistence with other nations.

<https://www.cpa.org.au/guardian/2019/1882/01-war.html>



Photo: Denis Doherty



# CUBA NEEDS YOU!

## Join the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society

The Australia-Cuba Friendship Society aims to promote and encourage friendship, understanding, cultural, trade and other exchanges between the peoples of Australia and Cuba.

[ ] I wish to join the ACFS. Enclosed is a cheque/money order for \$30 (full membership) \$15 (concession)

[ ] I am interested in the annual work/study trip to Cuba. Please send me information.

[ ] I wish to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ towards the material aid campaign for Cuba.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

P/C \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter preference (please tick one) Email ☐ Mail ☐

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: ACFS PO Box 1051, Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia

### Please send your remittance to:

Bank: Commonwealth Bank of Australia

BSB: 063011


Account Number: 00900817

Account Name: Australia-Cuba Friendship Society Victorian Branch

**Please include your name in the receipt.**

**WHY WE SUPPORT CUBA**

AUSTRALIA CUBA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY



Order your copy of the "Why we support Cuba" book for only \$5 (\$6 if posted)

Contact Joan - 9857 9249

## Old CUBA World Heritage By Joan Coxsedg

*"A personal story about Cuba during my three visits to the tiny island nation with drawings, text and a potted history"*

*"In presenting this fine collection of pen and pastel drawings, I am certain that Australians who view it will be inspired to learn more about Cuba..."*

*Eusebio Leal, Chief Historian of the City of Havana*

**Only \$20** Plus postage (\$2:10 -1copy, \$3:50 for 2)

Please make cheques payable to:

Joan Coxsedg

8 Leicester Street, North Balwyn, 3104



**OLD CUBA**  
WORLD HERITAGE

A personal story about Cuba during my three visits to the tiny island nation with drawings, text and a potted history

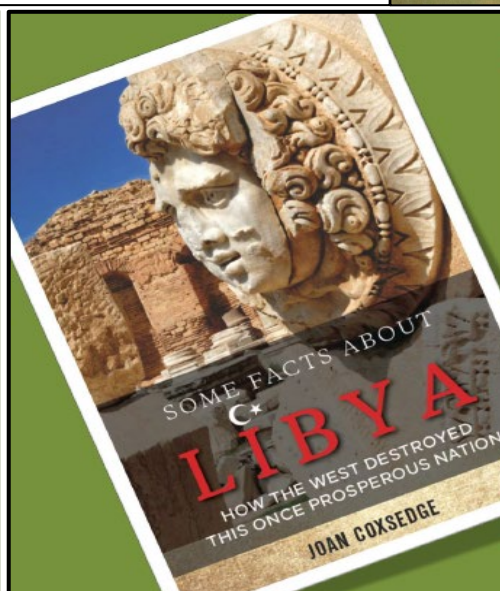
Joan Coxsedg

**Don't forget to check out the latest on the Melbourne ACFS Website**

[www.melbourneacfs.org](http://www.melbourneacfs.org)

Or contact us directly at

[melbacfs@yahoo.com.au](mailto:melbacfs@yahoo.com.au)



## LIBYA

Get your copy of this important new book by

**Joan Coxsedg**

Available only at ACFS meetings

**\$5**

**SORRY...NO POSTAGE due to cost**