

What the U.S. Spreads Around the World

The essence of what exists in the U.S. is not democracy but capitalism-imperialism and political structures to enforce that capitalism-imperialism.

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**Bob Avakian
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Photo: Getty Images

Young girl burned by U.S. air strikes on the villages of Shiwan and Granai, in Farah in Afghanistan. The May 4, 2009 attack killed over 140 people, including 118 women and children.

On May 5, 2009, over 140 civilians, including women and children, were killed by a U.S. air strike on the town of Farah, Afghanistan. This is the highest death toll in a bombing since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. The U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and installed a puppet regime. Now it is trying to forge a broader alignment of pro-U.S. local reactionary forces. And Obama is sending *more* occupation troops to enforce control over the country and the region. These U.S.-imposed political structures in Afghanistan are in the service of controlling strategic oil and gas pipelines. They are about locking down military domination of this key geostrategic region. All of this is in service of reinforcing the role of the U.S. as the world's sole imperialist superpower.

The U.S. has a long history—and continuing practice—of undermining and outright overthrowing Third World governments. This includes leaders and governments that came to power through elections when they stood in the way of U.S. imperialist interests. Take a look, for example, at the bloody track record of the U.S. just during the year 1982. The U.S. was sponsoring brutal guerrilla wars in Mozambique, Angola, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan. The U.S. was carrying out brutal repression in El Salvador and Guatemala, where right-wing regimes and death squads killed, according to some accounts, over 270,000 civilians. The U.S. was backing the Israeli invasion of Lebanon that killed 20,000 Palestinians and Lebanese. The U.S. was fomenting and perpetuating an eight-year war between Iran and Iraq, where estimates range from 500,000 to 1.5 million dead. In fact, try and find any region of the world where the U.S. imperialists have not spread “democracy” in the form of bloody coups, vicious wars of plunder and repression, or civil wars carried out by proxies and agents. We don't think you can.

Photo: AP



Honduran soldiers in a joint military exercise with the U.S. Air Force in 1982 along the Nicaraguan border near Puerto Lempira.



Photo: Li Onesto/Revolution

Destruction of B.W. Cooper public housing by bulldozers, New Orleans, 2008.

When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2006, the government at all levels, federal, state, and local, abandoned tens of thousands of Black people and others—left to die, brutalized, herded into the most inhuman conditions and then cruelly evacuated. The National Guard was called in to bring down repression, not to rescue those who were suffering but to protect private property and maintain these super-exploited, impoverished masses in a passive and oppressed position. In the years since Katrina, the system's crimes against the people have continued. Neighborhoods which were poor and predominately Black were abandoned. People who were separated from their families and friends and scattered across the country were given little government help in moving back and getting their lives back together. Almost every attempt by the people to rebuild became a battle against government structures and policy. In 2007, the city council of New Orleans voted to bulldoze an estimated 5,000 units of low-cost housing in the face of outrage and resistance from the people. This occurred as people were being evicted from FEMA trailers and homelessness in New Orleans hit record highs with a conservative estimate at 12,000, meaning one in 25 residents of New Orleans were homeless.

Photo: AP



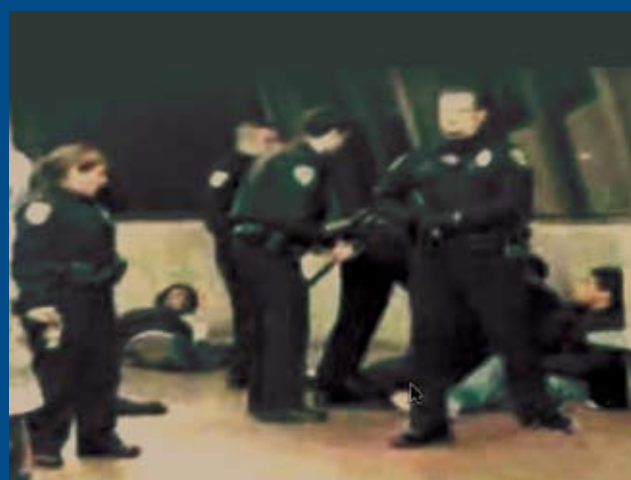
Children playing in the Sidi Moumen slum of Casablanca, Morocco, 2009.

Poor countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have been subjected to Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. SAPs require that Third World governments must meet strict conditions to get new loans or to obtain lower interest rates on existing loans. Both the IMF and World Bank are controlled by the imperialist powers, especially the United States. And this restructuring creates more favorable conditions for imperialist trade and investment. SAPs have forced Third World governments to open up markets, land, and other resources to imperialist agribusiness, including food exporters. And they have hurt the mass of peasant producers. They force governments to cut subsidies to small farmers and support programs in rural areas, and to emphasize high-value export agriculture (like asparagus or exotic flowers). This, too, draws resources away from traditional and subsistence agriculture. The agricultural economy of whole countries becomes dictated by the needs of imperialism—not by what the people need to survive. All this has led to millions of peasants around the world being driven off their land, into urban shantytowns and across borders into other countries where they face intense repression.

Photo: Li Onesto/Revolution



New Orleans, 2008: Homeless encampment under the freeway.



Screen shot from a cell-phone video of the police beating and murder of Oscar Grant, January 1, 2009 in Oakland, CA.

[06] [Holding #2] [Sat Nov 29 2008] [04:39:34]



Screen shot from a videotape of the police beating of Malika Calhoun, a 15-year-old African American woman, in a jail cell at SeaTac city hall in Seattle.

A whole generation of Black and Latino youth have been criminalized. Faced with massive unemployment and scrambling for low-wage off-and-on jobs, often forced into the criminal economy and life—this capitalist system has no future for them. The police stop, search, humiliate, beat, and kill these youth to enforce their place in the capitalist-imperialist system. On January 1, 2009, 22-year-old Oscar Grant was murdered in cold blood, shot in the back while he was being punched and pinned to the ground by Oakland transit cops. Then over a hundred were arrested for protesting this murder. This outrage stands out, but not alone, as an example of the hundreds and thousands of other victims of these armed enforcers.