

*Combating Globalization:
Confronting the Impact of Neoliberal Free Trade Policies
on Labor and the Environment*

By

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I. Global Megatrends of the 21st Century

Modern economic class struggle--the unremitting fight over the distribution of the wealth created by social production that erupted in the 19th century and dominated the 20th--underlies all of the major impending crises of the 21st century.

The stakes of this historic conflict are higher than they have ever been. Every aspect of human life is changing at an unprecedented rate, and three overarching trends that will affect the lives of everyone on the planet have been confirmed beyond any reasonable doubt.¹ These three global megatrends are:

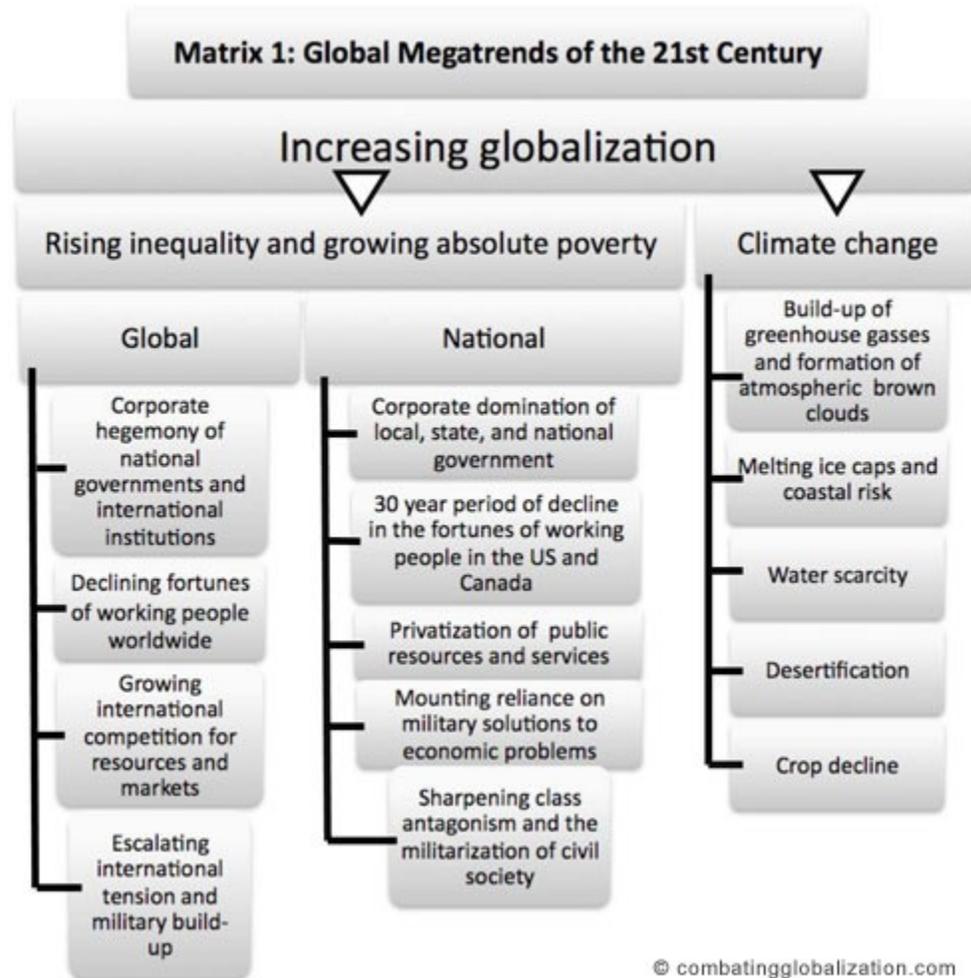
- *Increasing globalization*
- *Rising local, regional, and global inequality and growing absolute poverty--all factors that intensify political conflict*
- *Global climate change*

These three megatrends are interrelated--all of them are consequences of unrestrained global capitalism which is relentlessly exploiting the resources and working people of the world in the process of accumulating capital for those who own the means of production and finance.

The United States of America is the biggest player in the expansion of global capitalism. The free trade policies adopted by the USA after World War II and imposed on virtually the entire

world during the last 30 years are the driving forces behind the present megatrends that are plaguing the modern world.

Matrix 1 diagrams the interconnections of the global megatrends:



Increasing globalization, *the domination of the world economy by transnational capitalism*, is the primary global megatrend. This ever-increasing concentration of economic power is the cause of the two secondary global megatrends: rising economic inequality between people and among nations, and runaway global climate change.

In matrix 1, the socioeconomic and environmental outcomes of the secondary megatrends are linked to their respective sources by black lines. These concrete consequences of globalization are seen everywhere and in every aspect of human life on earth: fabulous wealth for the few and grinding poverty for the masses; the privatization of all aspects of social

life and the lack of basic social services for growing segments of the population; the militarization of civil society and the world; and the reckless destruction of the environment.

Matrix 1, which identifies the relationships between the megatrends of the modern world and their results, offers a ready reference for meaningful debates on contemporary political issues.

The megatrend of rising inequality presents an unparalleled threat to political stability worldwide and deserves particular attention.

II. Rising Inequality: The War on Working People

The term *globalization* is a euphemism for the economic policies of neoliberalism and free trade that drive the megatrends ravaging the world today. *Globalization* in this essay refers specifically to the domination of the world economy by transnational capitalism through state-sponsored policies that subordinate the broad interests of communities and nations to the interests of the owners of capital.

The primary economic drivers of globalization are:

- the capture of emerging CONSUMER and CAPITAL MARKETS to insure the continued accumulation of capital through sales revenue and interest income
- access to cheap RAW MATERIALS and LABOR to increase the rate of capital accumulation on the production of goods and services

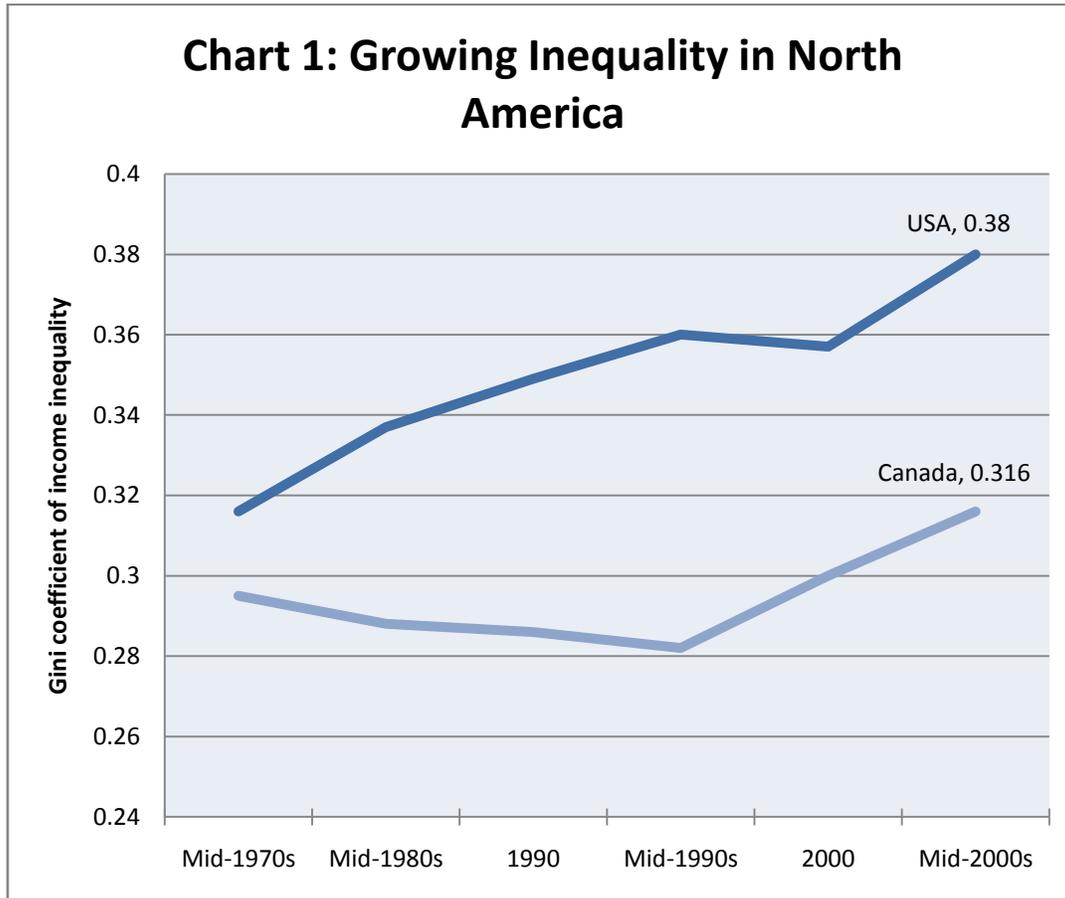
It is capitalism's relentless quest for cheap labor that impacts working people directly and drives the megatrend of rising inequality on both national and global levels. The creation of wealth by human labor, whether the worker is employed in agriculture, manufacturing, or service, is the sustaining activity of all societies and the division of that wealth between the workers and the owners of capital is the essence of class struggle.

To understand and combat globalization, it must be kept foremost in mind that it has been through consolidation of political power at every level of government from local to international that capital has attained its domination of working people in the modern world.

The following discussion focuses on the megatrend of increasing inequality in North America, but the same tendency is growing in both developed and developing countries around the world.

Rising Inequality

Chart 1 depicts the ongoing history of growing inequality in North America:



The Gini coefficient on the vertical axis of chart 1 is the most commonly used measure of income inequality within a nation (http://hdr.undp.org/docs/statistics/understanding/resources/HDR_2003_2_2_global_income_inequality.pdf). A low Gini coefficient indicates more equal income distribution while a high Gini coefficient indicates a more unequal allocation. 0 represents perfect equality (where every person has the same income) and 1 corresponds to perfect inequality (where one person receives all of the income in a society). The income measure used to calculate the Gini coefficients in chart 1 is disposable household income adjusted for household size.

The chart illustrates the trend of inequality that has been on the rise in the USA since the mid-1970s. By the mid-2000s the average household income of the richest 10% of the population was \$93,000 per year while that of the poorest 10% was \$5,800. The USA is the country with the highest inequality level and poverty rate in all of the countries monitored by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) except Mexico and Turkey (www.oecd.org). Since the mid-1980s the distribution of earnings in the USA has widened by 20%.

Accumulated wealth in the USA is allocated even more unequally than income. Currently the top 1% of the population controls 25-33% of the total wealth in the nation, while the top 10% holds 71%. Redistribution of income by government through taxation and the provision of social services in the USA is the lowest in all of the countries monitored by the OECD except South Korea.

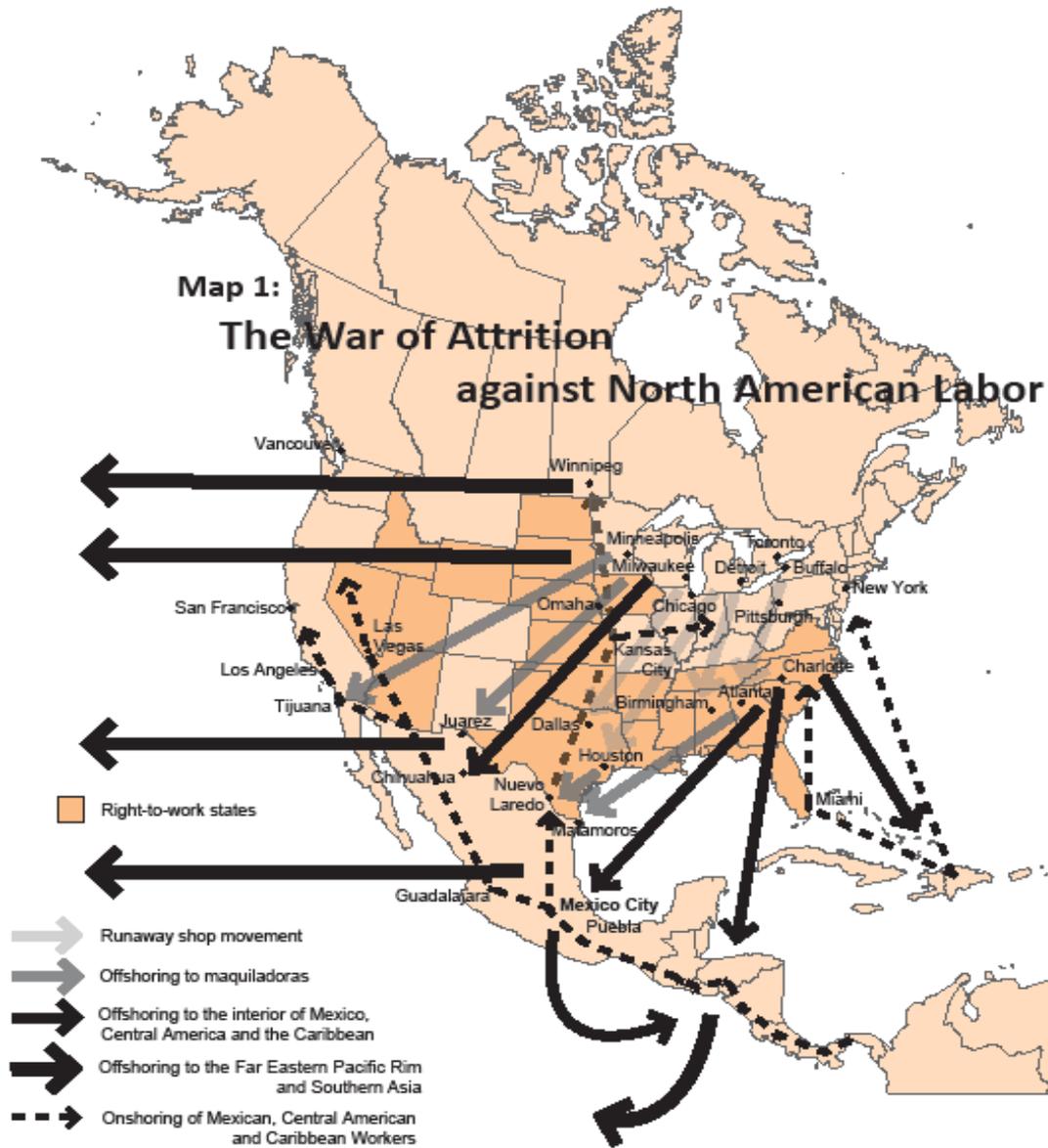
The inequality trend in Canada has had a distinctly different history from that of the US. Chart 1 shows that inequality actually decreased from the mid-70s to the mid-90s, and then increased significantly throughout the last decade, mirroring the trend in the USA. The last 10 years has also seen dramatic increases in poverty rates across Canada.

The impact of growing income inequality on working people in both the US and Canada has been heightened by dramatic tax cuts for the wealthy and corresponding declines in social services and social benefits paid in both nations.

The sharp upturn in income inequality in North America is a direct outcome of economic liberalization policies like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that will be examined in detail in the following analysis (The impact of NAFTA on workers in Mexico in contrast to the trends in the US and Canada will be the subject of a subsequent essay.).

The War of Attrition against Working People

The decline in the fortunes of working people in North America (and worldwide) is a direct result of capital's relentless pursuit of cheap labor markets, a primary driver of globalization. Map 1 charts the history of the war of attrition that capitalism, led by US corporations, has waged against labor in North America in order to maintain high rates of capital accumulation for stockholders:



Working people in the USA have been steadily losing ground since the end of World War II. The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 in addition to severely restricting the legal rights and grassroots activities that built strong unions prompted states to pass right-to-work legislation

(<http://www.auburn.edu/~johnspm/gloss/right-to-work>) and thereby provided the means for businesses to relocate rather than negotiate with labor unions. The lightest arrows on Map 1 follow the subsequent runaway shop movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

During this period, many manufacturing and heavy industries, supported and subsidized by local, state, and federal agencies, moved their operations from Midwestern cities like Chicago, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Milwaukee to cities in the South like Atlanta, Birmingham, Houston, and Dallas/Fort Worth where industries not only avoided closed union shops but also profited from a work force stratified along racial lines. The weak unions that did exist in the American South were either de jure or de facto segregated institutions that supported sliding wage and benefit scales which pitted white against Black and Mexican-American labor. Historically, the unions of the Deep South served the interests of capital far more than they did those of working people.

The American South did not remain the final destination of US capital for long. The termination in the mid-1960s of the bilateral Bracero Program that had been implemented during World War II to make Mexican labor available to US agriculture and the subsequent mass deportation of *braceros*, coupled with the widespread dislocation of workers in the weakened Mexican economy, produced a reserve industrial army for US capitalism just south of the international border.

Industrialists of the North quickly took advantage of this cheap labor market. The mid-tone arrows on map 1 mark the extensive migration of US light manufacturing and assembly firms to the *maquiladoras* that were established in northern Mexico under the auspices of the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) that was drafted by representatives of US capitalism and ratified by both governments in 1965. To this day, consumer goods and assembly parts produced in the *maquila* sweatshops continue to flood northern markets and undermine the position of workers in the Midwestern states, Canada, and even the Deep South.

The thin black arrows on map 1 represent the expansion of *maquiladora* manufacturing to the interior of Mexico under NAFTA and into Central America and the Caribbean under the Central American Free Trade Agreement-Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR). US capitalism is currently developing new offshoring initiatives under the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) and has not given up on the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) which is aimed at exploiting labor markets in all of the nations of the hemispheric South.

The wide black arrows on map 1 symbolize the ultimate threat to all labor in the Americas--the massive offshoring of manufacturing, service, and professional jobs to the Far Eastern Pacific Rim and Southern Asia. This last strategic move by capitalism--the epitome of globalization--pits all workers in the Americas, blue-collar, white-collar, and even professionals, against the poorest and most oppressed workers on the planet.

If the trend of increasing globalization continues unchallenged, the final destination of ever more production, including the crucial North American auto industry which is currently expanding operations the America South and Mexico, could ultimately be the Far East.

The broken black line on map 1 represents another major trend that has undercut labor in the North--the massive onshoring of Mexican, Central American, and Caribbean workers to bolster capitalism in the USA and Canada. Although the practice of onshoring labor from the South dates back to the US conquest of Mexico in the 19th century, the first official US policy was the Bracero Agreement recounted above. After the termination of that bilateral agreement, the onshore manpower demand of northern capitalism was accommodated by a de facto gatekeeper policy on the southern US border that allowed the influx of migrant labor during periods of high demand and impeded migration during economic downturns.

As part of a strategy to meet the current economic crisis of capitalism, powerful sectors of the US business community want to adopt an official guest worker program to legalize the exploitation of labor from the hemispheric South while avoiding any social liabilities for workers or their families. Any such agenda must be recognized as nothing more than a program of transient servitude that undermines the position of all working people in North America and must be vigorously opposed (see *Transient Servitude: The U.S. Guest Worker Program for Exploiting Mexican and Central American Labor* at <http://www.monthlyreview.org/0107.htm>).

The significance of the 60-year campaign against labor depicted in map 1 is clear--the working people of the world will never be secure and inequality will continue to rise on both national and global levels as long as capitalism is given free rein to pit the working people of the world against each other. The manufacturing trends pictured in map 1 are strikingly similar to the practice of slash-and-burn agriculture--initially profitable but ultimately unsustainable exploitation that leaves ruin in its wake. The Rust-Belt of the American Midwest and the abandoned communities and factories in the American South, Canada, and Mexico are stark testimony to the opportunistic strategy of multinational capitalism.

The collateral damage of globalization, in addition to abandoned factories and communities and extensive regional environmental damage, has grown into another of the global megatrends of the modern world--accelerating, and possibly irreversible, climate change.

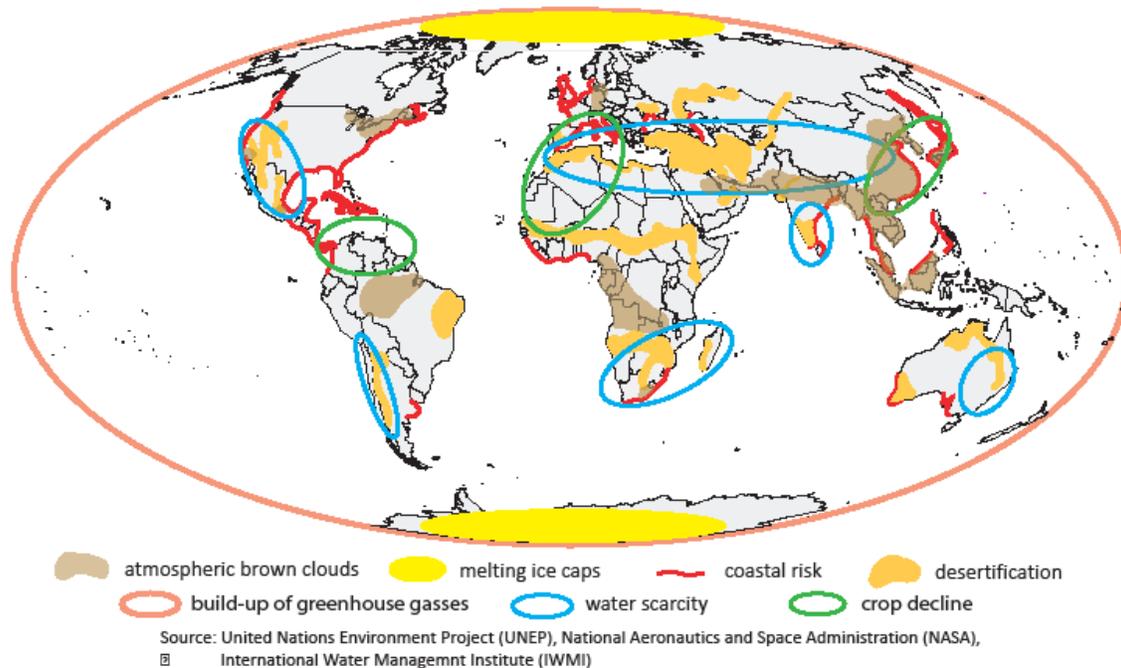
III. Climate Change: The Collateral Damage of Globalization

Scientific consensus holds that climate change is occurring and will continue at an accelerated rate throughout the 21st century. Scientists have also established that a large part of global warming is attributable to unregulated economic activity that is releasing increasingly larger amounts of greenhouse gasses and other pollutants into the earth's atmosphere.

Map 2 surveys environmental damage and risks of global climate change:

Map 2:

Environmental Damages and Risks from Climate Change



The earth has already experienced significant environmental damage attributable to climate change. The orange frame around the world on map 2 illustrates the major consequences of global warming. The build-up of greenhouse gases produced by the burning of fossil fuels has triggered the melting of the polar ice caps and glaciers and is contributing to rising sea levels that endanger low-lying coastal plains around the world. Specific coastal areas at risk are marked in red on map 2. Widespread coastal flooding could ultimately displace millions of people and destroy critical croplands around the world.

Atmospheric brown clouds (ABCs) compound the effects of global warming. ABCs, marked by the brown blotches on map 2, which occur worldwide, are expanding most rapidly over Asia. A three kilometer-thick (1.86 mile) layer of airborne soot produced by burning fossil fuels combined with other particulate matter now shrouds an area from the Arabian Peninsula across southern Asia to China and the western Pacific Rim. In conjunction with rising concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, ABCs are exacerbating the effects of climate change at an alarming rate.

Continuing climate change will aggravate the problem of water scarcity worldwide, especially in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, regions that are already severely water stressed, and will trigger the desertification of vast tracts of land. The resulting crop decline will worsen the problem of trying to feed the growing population of the world.

The fact that global climate change is the collateral damage of globalization is indisputable. For the first time in history, global environmental collapse as a result of reckless economic activity is an imminent possibility. The consequences of such a catastrophe would include societal collapse and mega-migrations that would inaugurate an era of unprecedented human conflict over declining resources.

A look back at matrix 1 reveals another secondary global trend that is as dangerous to the future as the megatrend of global climate change--escalating international tension and military build-up. This global trend is also driven primarily by US capitalism.

IV. US Global Domination and the Prospect of Endless War

The history of US military actions around the world shows that US capitalism is a staunch adherent to the principle that war is an extension of politics by other means. After 165 foreign military interventions and two world wars (www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL32170.pdf), the USA emerged in the mid-20th century as the most powerful of the capitalist states and, with the subsequent fall of the Soviet Union, became the world's lone superpower. The imperative of US capitalism to dominate the globe makes the USA the greatest military danger in the modern world and the current US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to control the Middle East demonstrate that imperative in action.

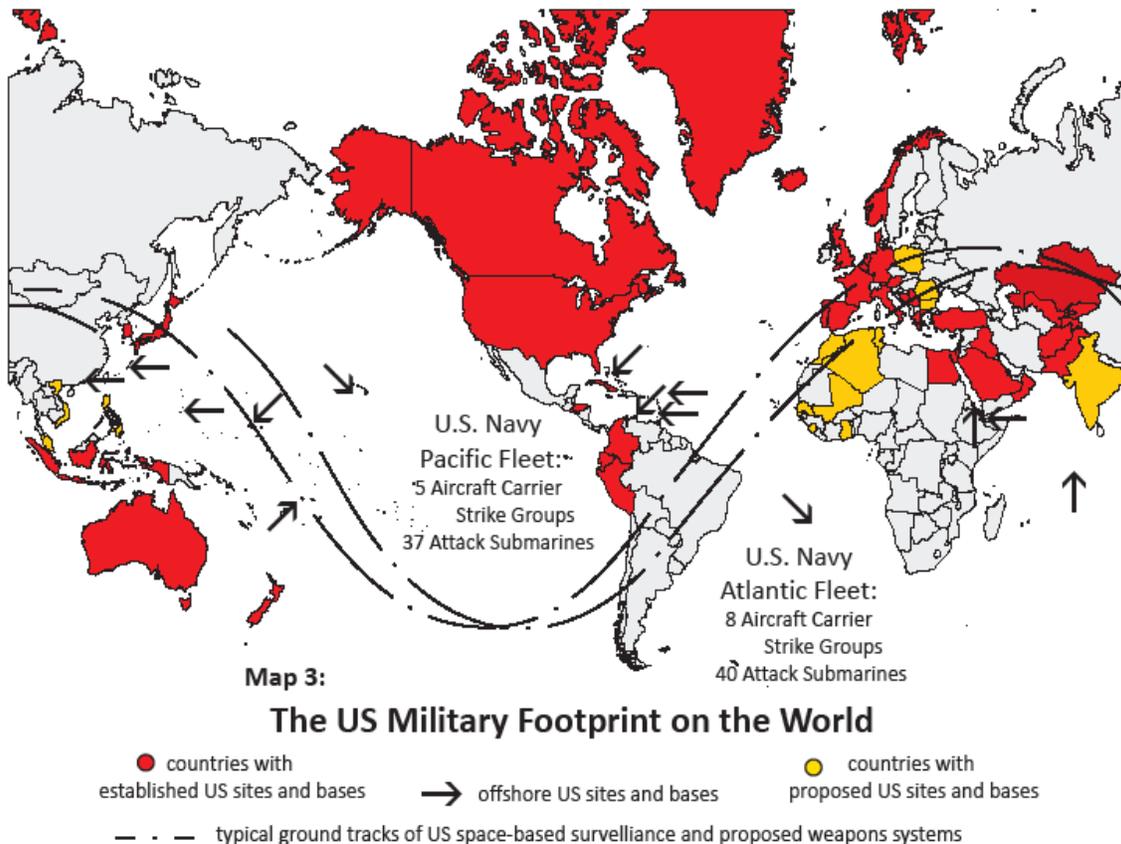
US Global Domination

The US Department of Defense's (DOD) *Joint Vision 2020* presents the strategy that the nation's armed forces are committed to in the immediate and foreseeable future. The key concept in DOD strategy is the doctrine of *full-spectrum dominance*:

"Full-spectrum dominance means the ability of U.S. forces, operating alone or with allies, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the range of military operations."

(<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=45289>)

There are no geographic limits recognized in the doctrine of full spectrum dominance, and map 3, based on the DOD's *Base Structure Report*, 2008, reveals that the military threat of US capitalism is, by any definition, a global threat:



Source: US Department of Defense, *Base Structure Report*, 2008.

Map 3 illustrates the US military footprint on the world today. The most striking features of the map are that there is not a single continent free of US military presence except Antarctica (not shown) and that the US Navy rules the oceans of the world with 13 aircraft carrier strike groups and 77 attack submarines.

The global threat presented by the US Navy is formidable. A single aircraft carrier with its complement of 50-60 strike aircraft and numerous support ships can launch more than 150 sorties a day against coastal targets (where population tends to be concentrated). With stocks of over 4,000 bombs and 100 guided missiles, a single US aircraft carrier strike group is bigger and more lethal than the entire military force of most nations.

US Navy attack submarines are capable of surprise military assaults well beyond immediate coastal zones. Armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles, US attack submarines are capable of precision long-range strikes as they demonstrated in both Gulf Wars by launching missiles from the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea at targets deep inside Iraq. The newest Cruise missiles, which can be armed with either conventional or tactical nuclear warheads, have an operational range of 1,500 miles.

The US Air Force can hit targets beyond the reach of the US Navy. The Air Force currently maintains over 170 strategic long-range bombers, 20 operational stealth bombers, and 450-500 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) at various locations around the world. The ultimate US military threat is a stockpile of at least 3,500 nuclear warheads that are available to the US Air Force, Navy, and Army.

Map 3 shows that the US military footprint on the ground is ubiquitous. As of 2008, the US Army had 327 bases in foreign countries, the Air Force occupied 259, the Navy 149, and the Marine Corps 26 for a total of 761.

(<http://www.acq.osd.mil/ie/download/bsr/BSR2008Baseline.pdf>). The sizes of these military facilities range from vast Main Operating Bases (MOBs) like Ramstein Air Base in Germany, the largest community of US citizens outside of the country, to small unmanned Cooperative Security Locations (CSLs) scattered around the world that preposition weapons and munitions and provide staging areas for small-scale interventions in foreign countries.

To expand its range of full-spectrum dominance, the USA is currently in negotiations for additional sites and bases in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa (the yellow areas on map 3).

The weaponization of space, symbolized by the typical ground tracks superimposed on Map 3, represents the latest efforts by the US military to establish global full-spectrum dominance. Spy satellite systems have been operational for almost 50 years and are constantly being upgraded, and space-based weapons are currently under development. An example of the latter is the Common Aero Vehicle (CAV), an orbiting spacecraft capable of hitting any target on the globe with a thousand pounds of conventional munitions or a tactical nuclear device within two hours of initial targeting (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A38272-2005Mar15?language=printer>).

The commitment of US capitalism to the use of military force to maintain global domination is staggering by any measure. The USA now has the largest standing military in the world, employing nearly 3 million military and civilian personnel at a cost (which has doubled since the year 2000) approaching \$700 billion per year. The environmental cost of the global US military commitment is totally unacceptable by any standards.

The US military is the single biggest polluter in the world and is totally reckless and irresponsible about the environmental impact of its operations. In the Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) that it signs with nations around the world, the US government generally insists on exemption from environmental regulations and categorically disclaims any and all responsibility for cleaning up the pollution that the US military produces or leaves behind when it pulls out. On the national level and in US territories and coastal waters, the US military has been exempted from almost all EPA regulations.

The modern history of overt and covert military actions committed by US forces in pursuit of global domination is as sinister as the US military footprint on the world. That history is recorded on map 4:



Map 4:

US Military and CIA Intervention since World War II

■ targeted countries

✕ US government assassination plots

Source: William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Intervention Since World War II*, 2004
(<http://www.killinghope.org/>)

Map 4 shows the nations of the world that have been the target of US military or CIA intervention since World War II. This intervention map, like the US military footprint depicted in map 3, covers the world. Notice that North America which is dominated by the USA through sheer economic power and Antarctica which is protected by an international treaty that strictly prohibits military activities are the only two continents that have been spared overt US intervention since the Second World War.

US military operations during this era have included the infamous Christmas Bombing of Vietnam in December 1972 when B-52 bombers dropped nearly 20,000 tons of bombs on the city of Hanoi (<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB263/index.htm>) and the "shock and awe" strategy of Operation Iraqi Freedom (March 19--April 18, 2003) which included the launching of more than 30,000 guided and unguided munitions (including 504 cruise missiles) at targets in Iraq to destroy the infrastructure of the country prior to the US invasion. (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/uscentaf_oif_report_30apr2003.pdf). The reports of the collateral damage of these two major operations have never been made public.

CIA interventions during the post-war period ranged from covert operations (both successful and unsuccessful) to overthrow democratically elected governments that would not subordinate their countries' interests to the demands of US capitalism to involvement in the assassinations (or plots to assassinate) no less than 37 heads of state and leaders of popular movements who opposed US foreign policy towards their nations. The Xs on map 4 indicate the geographic locations of the targets of US government assassination plots.

The economic cost of this 60 year period of US military and covert intervention is incalculable, but credible estimates of the cost in human lives have been made. In-depth studies of the casualties of these operations have put the number of deaths attributable to overt and covert US military action, US sponsored proxy wars, and US backed repression in foreign nations at between 20 and 30 million during the post-WWII period (www.countercurrents.org/lucas240407.htm).

The modern history of US military and CIA intervention and the current US military footprint on the world leave no doubt that the megatrend of increasing globalization, defended by strategies like the US DOD doctrine of full-spectrum dominance, includes the prospect of endless war.

The Prospect of Endless War

Changing the name does not change the thing. The US Department of War changed its name to the US Department of Defense at the beginning of the Cold War, and after the fall of the Soviet Union the Cold War was replaced by the Global War on Terror, but US policy has never wavered from its primary mission to promote and protect the interests of US capitalism around the world. This mission, officially articulated in the DOD's doctrine of full-spectrum dominance, reflects the prospect of endless war to support globalization.

The ongoing attempt to dominate the Middle East, the expanding US military presence in Africa and the waters of the Caribbean, Central and South America (http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=36606), and the positioning of military forces in Eastern Europe, Southern Asia, and along the western Pacific Rim in anticipation of armed conflict with Russia and China, are sure signs that US capitalism intends to continue using military force as the endgame guarantor of globalization.

In the context of the worsening global economic crisis, the prospect of endless war in pursuit of the global ambitions of US based transnational capitalism is all but certain if we do not openly confront globalization on the national and international level.

V. Confronting Globalization

Rising inequality and global climate change are direct outcomes of the increasing domination of the world economy by transnational capitalism. The past 30 years have seen the consolidation

of the corporate hegemony of national governments and international institutions and the declining fortunes of working people worldwide. The rapid deterioration of the global environment is affecting everyone and escalating militarism presents a threat to all. Undoubtedly, combating globalization will be one of the most important struggles of the 21st century.

The question is, as always, what can be done? In order to successfully combat globalization we have to learn to think globally while engaging in related political action on various levels concurrently. Matrix 2 provides a way to approach the challenge:

Matrix 2: Political Initiatives to Combat Globalization		
Global Megatrend	National	International
Increasing globalization	<p><i>*Boycott any goods or services produced by oppressed workers at home or abroad</i></p> <p>Fight the offshoring of US jobs and onshoring of cheap labor</p> <p>End tax breaks, subsidies, and government underwriting for all US offshore and foreign onshore operations</p>	<p>Break the hold of transnational corporations on international trade and finance organizations</p> <p>Renegotiate all US trade agreements (including NAFTA) as fair trade agreements</p>
Rising inequality	<p><i>*Fight all regressive tax and privatization schemes at every level of government</i></p> <p>Repeal all anti-labor legislation including right-to-work laws and adopt constitutional labor rights for all US workers</p>	<p>Address labor rights directly in all trade agreements (not in side agreements)</p>
Climate change	<p>Adopt a sustainable US energy policy that stresses conservation</p> <p>Implement aggressive</p>	<p>Participate in all international</p>

	environmental protection and remediation policies	environmental protection initiatives Address environmental protection directly in all trade agreements (not in side agreements)
Increasing militarization	Reduce the size of the US military and restrict operations to strictly defensive functions End military aid to repressive governments Stop the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and fine the corporations that profited from them	Close all forward US strike bases (e.g. Okinawa and South Korea) and remediate the environmental damage caused by the US military Restrict US military operations to international waters and airspace Review all military alliances to insure they are essentially defensive in nature. Use the corporate fines to fund the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan
<i>*These essential actions can be effected by individuals at the grassroots level.</i>		

Matrix 2 explores the political initiatives to combat globalization that emerge from the foregoing analysis of the global megatrends. Each row of the matrix displays related national and international actions that address each megatrend listed in the left-hand column. For example, reversing globalization will require ending tax breaks, subsidies, and government underwriting that promotes globalization in the US and abroad, while at the same time breaking the hold of the transnational corporations on international trade and finance organizations. The challenge to increasing globalization will also require the renegotiation of all free trade agreements (including NAFTA) as fair trade agreements.

The vertical dimension of the matrix reflects not only the hierarchy of the megatrends but also the relationships between the various initiatives. Considering the same example of increasing globalization, matrix 2 indicates that ending the repression of labor will have to be linked to terminating the direct government support of corporations in order to reverse the megatrend of rising inequality.

Note that while matrix 2 stresses collective initiatives, it includes essential actions that can be effected by individuals. Such actions are the foundation of any grassroots political movement.

While the various relationships between megatrends and initiatives are complex, understanding them and acting on them is essential to combating globalization. Business and

government agents have embraced global thinking at all levels of planning and operations and so must labor activists and their allies.

Considering the sheer power and momentum that is driving globalization, the actions identified in matrix 2 may appear to be beyond reach. Stopping and reversing the global megatrends will entail extensive economic and governmental restructuring that will be resisted by all the forces that multinational capitalism and its allied state forces can muster.

Despite the odds, there have been three significant, though by no means final, victories against globalization schemes in the last 2 years. The examples that they offer to the anti-globalization movement are invaluable.

Three Victories

1. *The debacle of the Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC)* was a defeat of transnational capitalism's plan to build a massive private transportation corridor from Mexican ports on the Pacific coast through staging and distribution facilities in central Mexico to the US and beyond (<http://www.monthlyreview.org/0206vogel.htm>). The primary purpose of the corridor was to transport cheap manufactured goods from the Far East to markets in the heartland of the US and Canada. The TTC was the key link in the global chain. The I-35 branch of the corridor from the US inland port at Laredo, Texas was slated to run due north through Kansas City to Winnipeg. The I-69 branch was planned to run northeasterly from Laredo all the way to Port Huron, Michigan.

Clearly this global transportation corridor, the largest surface transportation project in US history, would have greatly expanded the infrastructure of transnational capitalism in North America and furthered globalization.

The people of Texas foiled the plan

(<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/latestnews/stories/010609dnmetttc.43c00ac6.html>). Though the TTC would have profited transnational capitalism quite handsomely, it would have cut wide swaths through the countryside, including some of the best farmland in the state, divided and disrupted numerous cities and communities along its route, and degraded the environment of entire regions. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDot) conducted a statewide misinformation campaign to promote the scheme, but it backfired. The TxDot town hall meetings, intended to manufacture public consensus, turned out to be standing-room-only events where local citizens, politicians, businessmen and women, environmentalists, farmers, ranchers, and numerous ad hoc organizations denounced the corridor scheme (<http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/vogel181207.html>).

The TTC victory is remarkable because it was conceived and executed almost exclusively at the grassroots level. The neoliberal politicians in Austin retreated in the face of

populist unity, but have not surrendered the fight. Their back-up plan is currently posted on the TxDot website (<http://www.dot.state.tx.us>).

2. *Stopping the offshoring of US and Canadian transportation jobs to Mexico* was another major victory in the struggle against globalization. Under the terms of NAFTA, US and Canadian owned trucking companies based in Mexico and employing Mexican drivers (working for Mexican wages) were to be granted access to all of North America, a move which would have drastically undercut the transportation labor market in the North (<http://www.monthlyreview.org/0206vogel.htm>).

This characteristic neoliberal stratagem was blocked decisively by the political actions of labor unions (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=14045396>), independent trucking associations (http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/215014/truckers_plan_blockade_of_white_house.html), and environmental organizations (<http://www.sierraclub.org/environmentallaw/lawsuits/0195.asp>).

3. *The defeat of the various guest worker programs that were proposed in 2007* was a major setback for all of the capitalists in North America who want to exploit labor from the South (<http://www.monthlyreview.org/0107vogel.htm>). The leading proposals (all modeled on the infamous Bracero Program) would have flooded the US and Canadian labor markets with millions of workers from the South living and working in the country in conditions of virtual servitude. The impact on the working people in the North would have been devastating.

This neoliberal strategy, currently in effect in developed countries around the world, was thwarted in North America by resistance from a broad spectrum of political groups ranging from organized labor and immigrant rights organizations on the left to traditional conservatives and nativists on the right. Since economic recovery of capitalism requires intensified exploitation of labor, proposals for comprehensive immigration reform are sure to resurface soon (<http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/June/200706291319321xeneerg0.4296839.html>).

Although these three victories against transnational capitalism are tentative and will have to be fought again, they are significant challenges that offer valuable lessons for the revitalization of the anti-globalization movement.

The task at hand now is to develop the vision that allows us to engage the numerous issues before us while linking them to the struggle against the global megatrends that are ravaging the world and its people. Armed with a global outlook, working people can consolidate their victories and successfully confront neoliberal globalization.

Conclusion

The current economic crisis has temporarily slowed the momentum of globalization, but transnational capitalism is pushing for even more globalization as a path to its economic recovery. The future of the USA and the world will be set in the next few years--either the juggernauts of increasing globalization, rising inequality, climate change, and rampant militarization will continue their disastrous courses, or the working people of the world and their allies will confront globalization squarely and find a way toward a just and sustainable future.

(end)

ⁱ A credible analysis of current global megatrends can be found in *The DCDC Global Strategic Trends Programme, 2007-2036* that was produced and is periodically updated by the UK's Ministry of Defense (MOD). The DCDC Mission Statement and the text itself make it clear that the UK's MOD fully embraces the mission of defending globalization (www.dcdc-strategictrends.org.uk/). The extent to which the US Department of Defense has adopted the same mission is the subject of section IV of this essay. *The JOE (Joint Operating Environment) 2008* is the corresponding US strategic study (<http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2008/JOE.pdf>).