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After the horrific November 13 terrorist attack in Paris by ISIS, the rulers in the U.S., France, and other imperialist powers are again trying to line people up behind their war moves—including people who've opposed previous wars like the ones in Vietnam and Iraq. "We're not perfect," they say, "but at least we aren't religious lunatics like ISIS, and right now we have to defeat ISIS. There won't be any peace, and people will continue to suffer unless we defeat ISIS."

Bullshit... on many levels.



The U.S. defeat in the Vietnam War weakened the empire militarily and limited its ability to invade or attack other countries for a number of years; and the U.S. defeat in Iraq and its

difficulties in Afghanistan have prevented it from carrying out other large-scale invasions in the Middle East. Above: the scramble for the last helicopter out of the U.S. embassy compound in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), Vietnam in 1975 as liberation forces finally drove the U.S. out.

The U.S. and these other imperialists aren't waging war to "stop terrorism." They're conducting wars, military interventions, and maneuvering diplomatically to preserve the system of global capitalist exploitation that they dominate, a system which grinds up, crushes, uproots, and casts off literally billions of people. So when the U.S. acts, they act in order to destroy whatever they happen to feel is in the way of their domination and/or to set up or protect oppressive relations and oppressive regimes which maintain this whole system—including Islamic fundamentalist forces when that serves their purposes.

Just to take the most recent examples:

» The U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001 promising "liberation." It then put in power a murderous cabal of feudal power brokers, warlords, and armed militias hated throughout Afghanistan. All stood for brutal traditional relations, including the patriarchal enslavement of women, religious fundamentalism, and the subordination of Afghanistan to imperialism. (The new U.S.-backed regime was named the "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.")

» The U.S. promised liberation in Iraq too. But after the 2003 invasion, it tried to install a hand-picked collection of puppets and thugs committed to fully integrating Iraq into the U.S. empire. When that move failed, the U.S. turned to reactionary Shi'ite parties and militias, and then to traditional reactionary Sunni powers as well. All this fueled the rise of reactionary Islamic fundamentalism overall and ISIS in particular.

» For the last four and-a-half years, the U.S. has fueled the savage Syrian civil war in order to protect the whole putrid, U.S.-dominated setup in the Middle East—including the barbaric settler-colonial state of Israel, and barbaric states like Turkey and fundamentalist Saudi Arabia (which is preparing to behead over 50 people). As part of these machinations, U.S. allies have directly supported ISIS and other jihadist forces. A recently released secret 2012 intelligence report exposes that the U.S. and its allies tolerated or supported the formation of jihadist enclaves in eastern Syria and western Iraq.

Carrying all of this out has involved torture, atrocities, and mass slaughter by the U.S. military—"our troops"—on a scale way, way, way beyond the crimes reactionary jihadists have carried out. In Iraq it meant using cluster bombs, white phosphorous, and depleted uranium against the people of Fallujah in 2004; murdering 24 unarmed Iraqi civilians in Haditha in 2005; executing at least 10 Iraqi civilians, including a woman in her 70s and a five-month-old infant, in Ishaqi in central Iraq in 2006; and having a U.S. helicopter gun down 11 civilians in Baghdad in 2007.

In Afghanistan—this meant U.S. soldiers murdering two pregnant women, two criminal justice officials, and a teenage girl during a party near the village of Gardez; in 2012 alone it meant one U.S. soldier massacring 16 Afghan civilians—including nine children—in two Kandahar province villages; it meant U.S. soldiers breaking into people's homes, dragging them away and torturing them—sometimes to death—and then mutilating their bodies. One survivor reported he was threatened with 14 different types of torture and subjected to "electric shocks, beatings, simulated drowning, hanging from the ceiling, partial burial in freezing conditions, and the extraordinary and degrading torment of having a length of string tied tightly around his penis" for four days. (Daily Beast)

A recent study found that since 2001, U.S. wars were responsible for a total of **1.3 million deaths** in Afghanistan (220,000), Pakistan (80,000), and Iraq (one million) alone!

All these U.S. actions have strengthened reactionary Islamist movements, which have in turn carried out horrific crimes against the people—also in order to enforce backward, oppressive social and economic relations. Why should anyone expect that further U.S. interventions and escalations will do anything other than this? Why should anyone who understands this want to see those moves succeed—or "win"?

Imperialism and Islamic Fundamentalism Are NOT the Only Alternatives! We Need a Revolution!

As Bob Avakian insightfully pointed out, the relationship runs like this:

What we see in contention here with Jihad on the one hand and McWorld/McCrusade on the other hand, are historically outmoded strata among colonized and oppressed humanity up against historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system. These two reactionary poles *reinforce* each other, even while opposing each other. If you side with either of these “outmodeds,” you end up strengthening both.

While this is a very important formulation and is crucial to understanding much of the dynamics driving things in the world in this period, at the same time we do have to be clear about which of these “historically outmodeds” has done the greater damage and poses the greater threat to humanity: It is the historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system, and in particular the U.S. imperialists...

It is interesting, I recently heard about a comment that someone made relating to this, which I do think is correct and getting at something important. In relation to these “two historically outmodeds,” they made the point: “You could say that the Islamic fundamentalist forces in the world would be largely dormant if it weren’t for what the U.S. and its allies have done and are doing in the world—but you cannot say the opposite.” There is profound truth captured in that statement.

Bob Avakian, *Bringing Forward Another Way*

But imperialism and Islamic fundamentalism are NOT the only alternatives today. There actually is a viable chance to make revolution and bring into being a radically different, liberating society based on Bob Avakian’s new synthesis of communism. This revolution will come out of the existing contradictions of the system AND the work of revolutionaries now. This revolution is the ONLY source of real hope in the terrible situation confronting humanity now.

Strengthening imperialism—the very system responsible for the vast majority of the suffering and destruction on Earth today—including by supporting its wars and military machine—is only going to perpetuate this misery.

Just to be very clear: Revolutionaries totally oppose everything reactionary Islamist forces like Al Qaeda and ISIS stand for and all the horrific ways they fight for their Dark Ages agenda. Not

supporting your own rulers—even welcoming their defeat—is NOT the same as wanting the reactionary forces they happen to be opposing to win. Genuine revolutionaries support communists in every country, including those who come directly up against reactionary Islamist forces, and work to spread the ideas of communism even where there are no organized forces currently taking them up.

We do all this as part of getting to a whole better world—and right now, in this country, preparing the ground, preparing the people, and preparing the vanguard—getting ready for the time when millions can be led to go for revolution, all-out, with a real chance to win.

For background sources on death and destruction caused by the U.S., see:

[Endless War: As U.S. Strikes Tikrit & Delays Afghan Pullout, "War on Terror" Toll Tops 1.3 Million](#) , *Democracy Now!*

[The U.S. Legacy 10 Years After Invading Iraq: Death, Disease, Devastation, Displacement, Revolution](#)

[Obama's Pentagon Covered Up War Crimes in Afghanistan, Says Amnesty International](#) , The Daily Beast

[The A-Team Killings](#) and [The Kill Team: How U.S. Soldiers in Afghanistan Murdered Innocent Civilians](#) , *Rolling Stone*