

Bob Avakian Speaks Out, Interviewed by Carl Dix

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Part 1: The New Situation--The "War on Terrorism"

On War and Revolution, On Being a Revolutionary and Changing the World

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The *Revolutionary Worker* is very excited to present to our readers this interview and exchange between Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, and Carl Dix, national spokesperson of the RCP.

In coming weeks, the many different subjects covered in this important and wide-ranging interview will be made available. This week is Part 1. A number of additional segments will be coming soon in the RW. In the future, the complete interview will also be published, made available online, etc.

The transcript has been slightly edited for publication.

In heavy times like these, the people require extraordinary things to help prepare them for the challenges we face. What follows is truly extraordinary, something that will help arm those who want to take on the U.S. rulers' juggernaut of war and repression with the kind of understanding they need to deal with these times -- the immediate challenges in front of us and a whole lot more involved in changing the world. The *Revolutionary Worker* is beginning the publication of an important interview with Bob Avakian, the leader of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

I had the honor of doing this interview with him in early 2002. Going into it, I knew there were burning questions many people would've wanted to put to him if they had the chance. They had been putting those kinds of questions to me when I went out there around the Party's Draft Programme or got down with people around the "war without limits" the U.S. imperialist ruling class has unleashed on the world. I was going to have the responsibility, and the opportunity, to put these questions to him for them.

Doing this was intense. It was hard, and it was fun. I hadn't had a chance to get into it with Bob Avakian like this for quite a while. He was the same "fired man" (to borrow a term from Peter Tosh) who had provided crucial leadership for the revolutionary movement at key junctures so many times in the past. He was right on top of what was going down in the U.S. and around the world. And he had the same boundless enthusiasm to dig into world historic questions concerning the process of proletarian revolution. We spent several days doing the interview, getting into everything from the

current situation to the role of religion to what sustains him as a veteran revolutionary leader. And then, when we finished our work, we went deep into the night talking about basketball, movies and more.

I hope those who read this interview get as much out of it, and enjoy it as much, as I did in the process of doing it.

Carl Dix

Carl Dix : *We're facing a very serious situation. I mean the U.S. government has unleashed a "War on Terrorism," it's rained death and destruction on the people of Afghanistan; they've already sent troops to the Philippines and to Yemen as part of this war on terrorism; they're threatening next to attack Iraq, Iran and North Korea, and along with this they've brought down a virtually unprecedented repressive clampdown. I know you touched on some of these in the supplement, the Revolutionary Worker magazine supplement, that came out a bit ago,* but I wonder if you'd speak again to some aspects of that situation?*

Bob Avakian: Yeah, well, as you said, in that supplement "The New Situation And The Great Challenges," I did try to analyze both some of the main features of what's going on and also some of the underlying factors, but to touch on a few things, I think one of the most important things to recognize is what they're doing with what we call a whole juggernaut--a whole rolling force of war and repression--is *not* in response to what happened, or not essentially in response to what happened, on September 11, despite the fact that they seized on that situation to proclaim this "War on Terrorism." But the fact is that, for example, if you look at Iraq, which you just mentioned, there has been no serious effort even to establish that Iraq was somehow involved in or behind what happened on September 11, and the fact is with whatever they may try to do to cook up some kind of conspiracy theory involving Iraq and so on, they have been talking about the need to "take out" Saddam Hussein long before September 11, and since September 11 they've been talking about taking out Saddam Hussein in a context different than claiming that he's behind the September 11 attacks. In other words, they basically have said, we have to get him out of there. Partly they claim it's on the basis that he's trying to develop weapons of mass destruction, when as we know they themselves are the ones who developed these on a much more massive scale and have *used* them--the atomic bombs in World War 2 in Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan.

So, they partly brought that forward as a pretext, but really the essential thing is they've been saying for a while and now they're saying in a more accentuated way that they can't leave him in there. It's like good Mafia gangsters, which they are on a massive and worldwide scale. You can't leave somebody standing who stood up to you, even to the degree that Saddam Hussein did at the time of the Gulf War when he refused to take their orders at that time--not that Saddam Hussein is somebody that we would support

or someone who represents the interests of the people, but he's someone who, compared to the monsters that they (the U.S. imperialists) are, is a pittance, is a small-time oppressor, compared to the worldwide oppressors that they are.

But the point is that what they are doing is not primarily or essentially in response to September 11 but is part of a whole program they have--what we call their wild ambitions for recasting the whole world and taking down the Iraqi regime as one part of that. Threatening other regimes like Iran and North Korea is part of that. Trying to force even other imperialists and powerful states like Russia or other imperialists in Europe or Japan to fall in line with the new restructured way in which the sole superpower in the world, the U.S., is going to be running roughshod over everything else, even more--this is all at the essence of what they're doing. Of course, they're using the September 11 events, and they're using this broad and open-ended banner of fighting the war on terrorism where they proclaim for themselves the right to make war on anybody, anywhere, anytime and in an ongoing, open-ended way, anywhere in the world by any means.

Clearly this is more than retaliating for September 11. Certainly it has nothing to do with bringing justice for the people who were killed on September 11. It has to do with their own needs and interests and designs as an imperialist power, which is seeking to follow up on its political victory in the Cold War to further recast the world under its domination. This is what they did in fact in the first Gulf War when they went to war with Saddam Hussein, but now they feel they can and must do it on a much deeper and broader level, so the whole world is in their cross-hairs now. That's why (as you're talking about) they have troops everywhere and they're both trying to reinforce and deepen their exploitation globally and at the same time strengthen their position vis-...-vis other global gangsters, in other words, other imperialist powers, and also position themselves to where they can deal with any opposition or threat that comes down the line to them.

CD: *Okay, one thing that I think is important for you to speak to a bit--Colin Powell visited Nepal recently and while he was there he talked about supporting the Nepalese regime against the People's War being led by the Maoist party there and in saying that he said this is exactly the kind of thing that we're dealing with, with this war on terrorism against these kind of movements. And I wonder if you'd speak to the significance of gathering that into the mix of the war on terrorism.*

BA: *Yeah(laughs), I read about that and the first thing that struck me was, "Who the fuck is Colin Powell to come 10,000 miles away and tell people in the country of Nepal that the masses of people don't have a right to rise up against the oppressive regime and fight the enforcers of that regime--the police and armed forces of the Nepali regime-- in order to win their liberation, to cast off the centuries-long conditions of oppression and exploitation. I mean that's one of the poorest countries in the world and the people are suffering terribly and this is clearly a movement of the people of Nepal. It has arisen among and has a tremendous base of support literally among millions of people in*

Nepal. Nobody can even deny that. Yet here comes Colin Powell, and the articles I read on this never bothered to explain how the hell he got the right to have anything to say about it in the first place.

Obviously his so-called right derives from their position as imperialist overlords who are going to issue orders to everybody in the world. And again, we see that this so-called war on terrorism is just a cover for pursuing their imperialist interests, because this People's War is being led by the Maoist party, and Nepal, as you referred to, has nothing to do with September 11, again. It has nothing to do with terrorism, by any objective definition. It is not a war that's aimed against civilians to achieve political objectives, and in fact, if you apply that criterion, the biggest terrorists in the world by far, far and away, are the U.S. imperialists themselves.

And look through their history--both the whole history of the U.S. but even the history of the last century, or even since World War 2, and you go into Korea and you go into Vietnam, Indonesia, Chile, where they were behind coups that killed thousands and hundreds of thousands of people. And in Iraq they've been responsible for killing more than a million people and are killing 5,000 children every month through the destruction of the infrastructure and the water purification plants and the sanctions which prevent people from getting food and medicine. You know, the biggest terrorists in the world are these imperialists themselves, and some of the next biggest level terrorists are some of the other imperialists and in turn some of their "allies," including "strategic allies" like the regime in Turkey, for example--and you could go on and on. So clearly this war on terrorism is just hypocrisy as well as monstrosity. And they've even tried to include everything from Osama bin Laden, who does represent reactionary and oppressive forces (and the Taliban the same) all the way over to some extremely liberating forces like the Maoists who are leading the people and waging a liberating war in Nepal.

***CD:** Okay, well, going along with some of the global moves that they're making is also the heightened repression right here in this country, and again, they've moved very quickly to implant a repressive clampdown post-September 11, but even some of the things that they've imposed were things that they had in the works, and when you look at the Patriot Act, they were things they were trying to push through prior to September 11, as well as some things that were more newly pushed forward in their program following September 11--we're talking about the round-ups of Muslim, Arab and South Asian immigrants, the detention of more than 1,000 and hundreds of them still remain in jail, and they have been able to tie virtually nobody to anything that went down around September 11. So how are people to understand that? How should we look at that?*

BA: Again, I think going back to what we were saying earlier that September 11 was an event that they did have to respond to--assuming that they themselves weren't behind it. As the statement of the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement pointed out--this is something I keep coming back to because I think it really captures something important--in the murky world of intelligence, where duplicity is the currency, it may be impossible to know exactly who was involved in September 11.

Who is Osama bin Laden? Historically, he was tied with the U.S., and now they say he's turned against the U.S. Maybe that's so but it's not clear what all the different arrangements are and what all the different links and ties are between different intelligence agencies--U.S., Israeli or whatever--but let's assume that there was actually an attack that went down from forces not directly connected to these intelligence sources that killed thousands of civilians in the U.S. Well, whatever the U.S. knew about it in advance or whatever different forces linked up with U.S. institutions may or may not have known about it, the fact is they did have to respond. Again, like Mafia monsters on a worldwide scale, they can't let something like that go on and appear vulnerable. They don't give a damn about the people who died there. The only thing they care about is that they can't have it seem as though they can't maintain order in their own country.

So they don't give a damn about the people that died and they're doing monstrous things in the name of the people that died. But clearly the main thing that's going on is that they had a program that they were already moving to implement on a certain level, and now they've seized on this situation that was created by September 11 to pull out the throttle full scale and try to ram this through, in a big way. That's why we call it a juggernaut, and it does include their whole open-ended war internationally, but it must also be accompanied by this kind of heightened repression you're talking about within the U.S. because you can't go and wage open-ended war like this and not have a lot of repressive mechanisms already being implemented and much more machinery ready to bring into play, especially when this kind of thing starts to get out of hand and there's a lot of resistance, and there's what they call "blow back" internationally or even within the U.S. itself. Things could get very much out of hand by what they're unleashing and the very things that they're bringing into being. So they need repression now and they also need to prepare for even further heightening that repression as things go down the road.

It's very clear that they're creating, openly declaring, an open, unlimited war and they're creating a situation of a country that is more or less permanently at war--that's a permanent feature of the U.S. now. And then what has to go along with that is a lot of police-state repression and a whole repressive and intimidating atmosphere, because you can't carry out the one without carrying out the other. These things are of a piece for the reasons that I've said, and so clearly a lot of this has to do with their imperial aims and ambitions that were already in play--things they were doing in the region around Afghanistan in terms of the oil and the pipelines for the oil. This has been analyzed in our newspaper, the *Revolutionary Worker*, and people should check that out, but it's clear that in terms of the contention between different--not only corporations but imperialist states--over control of that oil...Russia's in the picture, you know, Germany's in the background. There's the question of other countries like Japan that are very dependent on foreign sources of oil and the Persian Gulf--and now these areas not in Afghanistan but near Afghanistan through which this pipeline would have to carry the oil.

All this is part of what's been in motion well before September 11. They were working with the Taliban for a while in connection with this. Then they figured the Taliban, (a) couldn't stabilize things as well as they needed them to, and (b) were not as important to their whole scheme of things when they started working with some of these other regimes that were formerly part of the Soviet empire in Central Asia. Now they're working with a lot of the former revisionists, you know, phony communist party bosses who have now become openly bourgeois political leaders in a lot of these republics in the area around Afghanistan.

So it's a shifting alliance that they're using. When someone or some force is useful to them, then they make use of them, and when things shift, they just toss them aside or trample on them. That's what they did with Saddam Hussein, whom they helped arm and turn against Iran in a war and they kept that war going to weaken both sides. It's the kind of thing they do all the time, and they had a lot of this stuff in motion well before September 11 and obviously they've seized on September 11 to push this full throttle, to clamp down on any forces or sections of society they think might already be in opposition and to prepare the basis to clamp down much more forcefully and broadly on society as a whole and to create a whole repressive and intimidating atmosphere where even to raise questions or dissent has been called traitorous or giving aid and comfort to the terrorists. And this whole thing about, "You're either with us or you're with the terrorists" is obviously meant to intimidate and stifle even questioning, let alone dissent and resistance.

CD:*Yeah, your discussion of the need on their part to clamp down on resistance now and being in position for even greater resistance that might break out as things go forward has brought up two things to me. One is just the experience of being in New York in the aftermath of September 11, because one thing that developed immediately afterward was kind of a scene in an area in Manhattan called Union Square--it's interesting, it's been a place where a lot of demonstrations step off from and when September 11 happened it became a place that people came to, to debate and discuss what was happening around this situation. And you'd have people, you know, who were coming questioning "Why do people around the world hate us? What's going on here? What is it that the United States is doing? Should the United States respond? How should it?" Some people were arguing that they were really shaken by what happened in New York on September 11 but they didn't want to see a war in response to that. Other people were like, "The U.S. has to respond." It became an area of open debate and discussion, where a significant edge of it was kind of capsulized in a slogan, and let me see if I can get this right, "Our Grief is Not a Cry for War." It became something that people were making signs, carrying around stickers, banners, you know, and really got taken up by a broad array of people as expressing how they felt about this--on the one hand that they did have genuine grief for the friends, loved ones, neighbors, and even just fellow city dwellers who did die on that day, but also that grief should not be used as a justification for the United States to rain death and destruction on the people of Afghanistan and, as they were promising and positioning themselves to carry out, spread it even farther around the world.*

So that was one thing I thought about. The other thing is it brought to mind Lenin's point during World War 1 that he raised in opposition to the people who were chilled into inactivity by the strength of their government as it moved and initiated war and the seeming public support for that, feeling that there was nothing that could be done at that point. And Lenin brought forth that "never is the government more in need of the acquiescence of the masses than when they go to war," and that seems to me to be an important point that, you know, we need to understand and spread among people now in the situation that we're facing.

BA: Yeah, I think it's important, picking up on what you were saying. I think if you look at the way, what their wild ambitions are, what their agenda is for reshuffling the deck, recasting the whole world order, in order to more firmly implant and fortify their domination and their top-dog position and their global exploitation, then clearly they need not to have opposition to that. They need to have people silent and obedient and cowed now and even weakened in their ability to wage resistance as things go down the road, because as you were just talking about, it's clear this is certainly not motivated by bringing justice for what happened on September 11--whatever that means when you're talking about imperialists--but also it's not largely in response to the events of September 11 themselves, although there is an element of that, as I spoke to earlier in terms of Mafia logic that they employ on a worldwide monstrous level.

But, you know, you're talking about how they've got troops in the Philippines, they're talking about Somalia--and a more outstanding example is Nepal which has nothing to do with September 11 but it has to do with their enforcing and trying to fortify their imperialist domination everywhere. This is an open-ended war they've declared. It's hard to think back in history and find another example, at least on this level, of an open-ended declaration of war-- basically wheeling around with their weapons saying we can attack anybody, anywhere, anytime we want by any means. And while they're warning about the danger of others having weapons of mass destruction, they're developing further their nuclear weapons, they're breaking out of the ABM Treaty, they're talking about restructuring their priorities as far as where to aim their nuclear weapons. They're making noises as they did even during the Gulf War ten years ago, more or less--they openly talked then and they're talking even more now about using nuclear weapons if it comes down to it. So, when you have something like that at play, you know, when you have something like that on your agenda, when that's what you're setting out to do, then you've got to clamp down and you've got to prepare to clamp down even much more forcefully on an even broader basis because that could give rise to all kinds of unexpected things and things that could get out of their control.

Even though they're trying to do it in a controlled way, step by step, at any step and certainly through the course of the whole thing all kinds of forces could get unleashed that would be wildly out of their control and all kinds of things could get in play that would be hard for them to keep hemmed in. So they need to have a whole atmosphere and they do need, as you said, the support of the masses of people, or at least the quiet acquiescence of the people. They need people not even to question, certainly not to criticize, and not to oppose. They need people to be cowed, at a minimum, even if they

can't get active support. And they do have some active support, partly on the basis of playing on September 11 and partly on the basis of appealing to people's privilege as part of living in an imperialist country where some of the spoils from this whole plunder worldwide are parceled out on a certain scale to certain more privileged sections especially. They do have some basis where people are confused or even more actively supporting them, but they need much more than that. They need a cowed population and an intimidated population because they know there are broad sections of the population, despite what they claim with their polls and everything else, who are at a minimum questioning and have stirrings of unrest and unease about everything they're doing and who, if they're not already opposing it, could well come forward in opposition if this thing becomes more pronounced and if what they're really about with this becomes more clearly out in the open and runs into some of the real contradictions and lets loose some of the forces that it could easily let loose.

CD: *You talked about what could happen if what this is really about gets more out in the open. Just in that context, I wonder if you'd speak to this question that sometimes gets posed by people that this is about oil--and that would seem to me to get part of it but there's more to it than that.*

BA: Yeah, I think you're right. It is partly about that, but it's not the whole or essence of what it's about. Some people say, "Look, Bush and Cheney, they're both oil men and they've been heads of oil corporations or whatever, and obviously this whole thing's about oil." Well, it is partly about oil, and we've talked about that and we go into it in some of our *RW* articles and I spoke to it a little bit in that supplement ["The New Situation and the Great Challenges"], but there is the whole pipeline around Afghanistan, there is the whole Persian Gulf, these sources of oil are very important, but they're not just important for the U.S. and for the functioning of U.S. imperialism and its economic foundation alone--they're even more important in the sense that other imperialist countries in the world, such as Japan which stands out very sharply, or other imperialist states in Europe like Germany, are themselves even more dependent on these sources of oil than the U.S. is, so it's not just a matter that the U.S. wants to have cheap oil so people can drive SUV's or that kind of thing. That's not at the heart of what's going on, but controlling these vital oil supplies and crucial lifelines of the global economy *is* important to U.S. imperialism, to all the imperialists, and it's important not only in order to be able to make profit but also to be able to contend with each other, and for the U.S. in particular to have an upper hand over these other imperialists. To the degree that it has control over these vital lifelines it's in a commanding position not only vis-...-vis other people and nations in the world generally, but also in relation to these other imperialists, so it's crucial from that standpoint.

Again, to invoke a very apropos and relevant analogy, it really is like Mafia dons battling. If you don't control something, if you leave an opening, then somebody else is going to come in and control it because they're all driven by the logic of the capitalist system and now in its international imperialist phase where they *have* to control these different

supplies, and if they don't, someone else will come in and get control of them and then get in a strengthened position to contend with them, not only over the oil but on a global basis. So this is the nature of the system we're dealing with.

This is related to what people used to say--remember when the Cold War was coming to an end there was a lot of talk among well-intentioned and good-hearted people that "Oh, now we can have a peace dividend. Now all this money that was spent on this massive military buildup as part of the Cold War for so many decades can be turned to things like dealing with AIDS in the world, or dealing with poverty in the U.S., even deeper poverty and more stark poverty around the world, you know, now we can meet the needs of the people for housing and all these other basic things that had not been on the agenda of the ruling classes." And it's very clear that's not happened. Where's this peace thing? Where's it gone--the "peace dividend?" It isn't anywhere to be found and it isn't gonna be on the agenda, 'cuz this is not the nature of this system, partly because there's no profit in these things for these imperialists-- and they are driven by profit and they're driven to have to not only exploit people, but also to be able to be in a strengthened position vis-...-vis their competitors. And this means not just various corporations competing but also this takes concentrated expression in the imperialist *states* contending with each other as representatives of the ruling classes of the particular imperialist countries. The U.S. is obviously an example of that with its open-ended war-- obviously an example of how that works.

So, given the logic and dynamics of this whole system--the expand or die, the whole Mafia logic on a massive scale, that you either grab something and control it or somebody else comes in and undercuts you and then is in a strengthened position in relation to you--they not only have not, but they *cannot* turn their attention to dealing with the problems of the people of the world. It's not on their agenda. And, in fact, now here we have the end of the Cold War and we have a more massive military budget than has ever existed (or nearly so). It's constantly being added to; it's certainly on the level of anything that's ever existed and it's constantly being added to, and with this open-ended war, who knows where it will go?

So there has been and there will be no peace dividend. This is not in the nature of the system that we're dealing with, and it's not just a matter of the evil intent of Bush or whoever happens to be in office. Looking on a world scale, they are the big evildoers but it's not just a matter of their own personalities or their own defects or flaws or whatever, but it's in the very nature of their system that it has to operate this way, and this is why it continues to operate this way. There's no more Cold War--now we have to prepare to make war all over the world on other forces (not the Soviet Union, which is no longer there) because if not, then our dominant position in the world and our ability to enforce our role as the top dog global exploiters, as well as exploiters and oppressors of masses of people in the U.S., will be undermined. So this is the nature of the beast that we're dealing with, and it's very important to grasp this or else we're not going to be able to mount the most effective struggle and resistance to this.

CD: *When you talk about how much is at stake for them, it gets me back to this point that you made before about "never do they more need the people to go along with what they're doing and quietly accept it and not to question and definitely not to rise up and resist it." That seems to me to be even more underscored and I think a part of how they've gone at it is this thing of confronting people with an overwhelming...or overwhelming people on a couple of fronts. One front being that they have come and very quickly and in a very all-around way imposed some of these repressive measures and then also trying to overwhelm people with the sense that "everybody's with it, and if you're not you're the only one, so you should shut the fuck up and just go along."*

BA: Again, as I said earlier, they don't give a damn about the people in this country, let alone throughout the world, and they don't base what they do on that. Despite their talk about how this is a democracy and the will of the people prevails and all that, there's a ruling class which controls this society and they don't operate on that basis and they're not motivated by what the people want or care about, or where their real interests lie. But they do have a need, as Lenin pointed out, to at least get the acceptance of the people--to at least get the acquiescence of the people, and they do need to drag people into political life sometimes in this era in order to be able to do what they're setting out to do. And they do need even international coalitions.

There's been this whole debate that's been somewhat out in the open, within the ruling class, and different spokesmen for different institutions in the ruling class: "Well, we need a coalition but should the coalition set the terms for the mission or does the mission set the terms for the coalition?" The people who said we have to be careful about not undermining our coalition have said that if we just go striking out in all directions at once or we don't win over people before we launch an attack on Iraq, for example, the thing could "blow back" on us, as they like to say. But the line that's come from Rumsfeld and the real hardcore of this has been, "No, we need to try to unite people in a coalition but the mission has to determine the coalition, not the other way around." Otherwise, as Rumsfeld said, the "mission will get dumbed down to the lowest common denominator."

So they have their sort of perverse United Front under their baton, and they have, of course, England running right along side of them. Although it's an imperialist power in its own right, it's much diminished from its days when the sun never set on its empire, now it's kind of like the Chihuahua running alongside the big dog--U.S. imperialism(*chuckles*). The big dog barks "ruff, ruff, ruff," and the British go "yip-yip-yip-yip-yip" but they (the U.S. imperialists) *do* need, besides just the British, to have a broader coalition at every point. But they're not going to let that coalition set the terms of the mission, as they say. They have their own aims and ambitions as the top dog imperialists, and they're going to act in accordance with that and other people can come along and find their place in relation to that and they'll pay some attention to the diplomacy of it--but that's the deal and you relate to it as that. Like Bush said, "You're either with us or against us," or "You're either with us or you're with the terrorists," even in those terms.

Similarly within the U.S., while they don't rule on the basis of what the people want or need or what their real interests are, they do have a need for the people to accept what they're doing and even in some ways they need to mobilize the population behind what they're doing, including because they know there are going to be sections of the population that are going to oppose what they're doing, and there are going to be people around the world massively who are going to oppose what they're doing. So they do have a real need to mobilize the people behind them and to get them to fall in line--and for those who can't or won't fall in line, to be intimidated and suppressed in terms of building any resistance. So I think this is very relevant--the point you brought up from Lenin about never are the governments in such need of the support of the people or at least the acquiescence of the people as when they go off to war and especially, once again, when they're waging an open-ended war like this.

So all this is a way of saying it is very important for them to both convince people to go along with them and to bludgeon them to go along with them, including by intimidating them through repression and creating this atmosphere and this "virtual reality" that everybody already goes along, and therefore you must go along too. And it's hard for people to oppose in this kind of situation, but this is a reflection, as you're pointing out, of a deeper fact that they're in need of this kind of support--that they appear to be very strong at the beginning of a situation like this and in a certain way they do have real strengths now and they have achieved certain real things in Afghanistan, although they're still encountering problems there, and it should be remembered that the Soviets also succeeded in stabilizing Afghanistan and occupying the cities under their rule when they first came in with their troops and reinforced basically a puppet regime there, so it remains to be seen even what happens in Afghanistan over a period of time.

But more generally than that, as things develop they're going to run into contradictions. They're going to run into unleashed forces that they hadn't anticipated, and things are going to have the potential to get out of hand in serious ways and may even get out of hand in serious ways, and there will be many repercussions from what they're doing and masses of people are going to be rising up against it in various ways. There's going to be a lot of turmoil and a lot of volcanic eruptions in different ways, and they need to have not only the support of people now but they need to create the conditions where if things do begin to get out of hand and there are all these volcanic eruptions, it's much more difficult for people to mount resistance. So what they're doing now is rallying people behind them, but also trying to create the conditions where they will be able to intimidate and as necessary outright crush opposition that would develop as things further develop and intensify. This should be seen partly as a strength of theirs but also as a strategic vulnerability of theirs, and the way they're acting now is a necessity they have--as you pointed out, referring to Lenin, they have a need for the people to support them and this need is never greater than when they go to war, especially given the fact that they declared an open-ended war like this.

CD: *One thing that the Party's been engaged in that I've actually personally been a part of is taking out to people the need to build much more significant resistance to the horrors that are being perpetrated in our name, so to speak, by the U.S. government, and in doing that we've met a positive response among a number of people who do in fact agree that much more significant resistance is necessary. We've also run into some questions, and I'd like to run past you some of these questions and have you speak to them some. I guess there are different kinds. Well, let me start right here. One thing that we've encountered from people, including people who are opposed to the things that are being done, both around the world and in this country, is that "Right now isn't the time to try to really build opposition, particularly on the front of the war--that what you can do right now is do education around it, that maybe you could take on some aspects of the repression, but that the war itself has got too much support right now to directly try to build opposition to it." I wonder if you could speak to that?*

BA: Well, I think first of all, on the last thing that you mentioned, it is very important obviously to build opposition to the repression within the U.S., and various forces including our Party have been actively involved and continue to be actively involved in building and broadening and deepening that resistance. And there are in fact some people, sections of people in the U.S., who are more opposed at this point to a lot of the repression and the attacks on Constitutional rights, and attacks on immigrants and these various things that are done with the round-ups of people from Arab countries and countries where Islam is the major religion, and so on. So it's very important that this be united with and built on, first of all.

But as for the negative point that it's not possible to build opposition to the war now, I've tried to speak to that a little bit earlier and I think it is important to come back to it, because I think if we look again at what are the consequences first in the negative sense--what are the consequences of *not* building opposition now? Again, we've spoken to some of that, and I think it's very important to continue to go back to that and deepen that. What's going to be the result if they're able to roll ahead with this juggernaut internationally? And is it in fact going to be easier to oppose them if they continue to go down that road, more or less unopposed, or if the opposition is not built powerfully? It's going to be, I think--it's a rhetorical question. It answers itself. If you think about it, it's going to be much more difficult either in terms of opposing the war or in terms of opposing the repression within the U.S., if they are allowed to go largely unopposed or at least if powerful opposition is not built or if the beginnings of that are not brought into being now. So that's on the negative side.

On the positive side, as I pointed to, the more that we build, bring forward opposition now, the more that the many people out there--and we know from our work among different sections of the masses, whether it's in the housing projects or the garment centers, or whether it's among students or other sections of the people, we know there's broad questioning and opposition, and the more that an actual organized resistance is developed out there, the more it's gonna call forth these people. Education is very important, but education divorced from actually engaging in resistance to this is not going to carry people very far and it's going to leave them in the position of feeling cowed

and intimidated and feeling isolated. But an open manifestation of opposition-- which includes obviously a big component of educating people about what's really going on in order to enable them to fully understand it and be unleashed to act around it--is very important, but not as a substitute for, or in opposition to, calling forth massive opposition.

And I think it's very important that when you look at--this is the experience that we've had for example from Vietnam. It's also, as people have pointed out, the experience in the early civil rights movement. It's wrong to look at what line-up the ruling class, with all of its organs of power and public opinion and influence, is able to create at any given time and look at that as if that's the limits of what you can do. The point I'm making is that our objective has to be to transform the political terrain and transform the outlook of many, many people on it and therefore the way they act in relation to it. The Vietnam War didn't start out as sometimes people think, with massive opposition to that war. It started out with smaller scale opposition mainly based on the campuses, (although not only), and then it developed partly as the war itself ran into the difficulties that the U.S. imperialists had in their inability to defeat the Vietnamese in that war, but also as people carried forward work to build opposition to that war.

So the question is not "What's the political terrain like at a given time and what is the alignment, so to speak, and what people think about this war and are doing about it now," but "What's the potential?" What are the ways in which that can be--the current terrain and the climate and the political alignment and the forces who are active can be--radically changed? And that begins with people who have an understanding of the need to resist rallying together as forcefully as possible, bringing forward open manifestations of opposition as some are already doing, but also bringing that together on an even more powerful level and putting it out openly, and openly taking a stance, as we've said, "No, Not In Our Name"--we're going to stand up and oppose this. We're going to draw a line and say that this cannot be done in our name and in fact we don't accept it being done at all, and we're going to rally forth the opposition to it and we're going to change people's minds through education but also through mobilizing people openly to oppose this so that people can see that there are other people out there who are opposing it.

And everybody knows that one of the best forms of education is when people do manifest around something and then the other people say, "Well, why are they doing that? What's motivating them? Why don't they go along? What is it that they think they know that I'm not learning?" I mean, not everybody thinks that but increasing numbers of people, the more you see people out opposing them, the more you're open to education. Whereas before that you may not be that interested in or inclined toward the educational work that people are trying to do to show you why you should oppose it. Now, again, educational work is important and can win over some people, but that happens on a much broader scale when people see broad and determined opposition out there which stakes out a clear and firm political position of opposition and says, "This must not go down. We must oppose this. It cannot be done in our name. It cannot be done at all and we intend to stop it." And if people who have a history of, and have won

a certain amount of deserved respect for their positions of opposing injustice and imperialist marauding around the world and warfare around the world, and people who are respected for the integrity they've shown, the work they've done in various spheres, rally together and openly put out this kind of a stance, then this creates (or strengthens) the basis and creates a lot more space for a lot more people to question and also to be more inclined toward opposing, or more open to learning about why they should oppose and then actually moving to active opposition.

CD: *Yeah, I can talk just briefly on that point, just from my own experience, I know that's real, because when I got my draft notice back in 1968, I mean, personally I didn't want to go to Vietnam (chuckles) and I knew that's what it was about because I didn't want to get shot. I don't know that too many people did want to get shot at and maybe killed, but it wasn't clear to me what was involved in that, what was at stake. And it was the fact that a lot of other people who are out there doing things that I wasn't ready to do yet that created more room for me to question and to find answers to those questions about what was really going on in Vietnam. And it got me to the point that when I got the actual notice to go to Vietnam--the orders to go over there--I was pretty clear that this was something that I should not be a part of because of what it was about. But if nobody had been standing out there and acting around it, I wouldn't have had that room and I might have been like a lot of the other guys who weren't real "down" for going to Vietnam but there were these orders and there was the stockade and the military police behind it, you know, they got you over there. So, actually, just on this thing, it reminds me of these Vietnam vets who talk about they got spit on all like this, and they were really upset about the protesters. Me, I want to thank the protesters for helping to open my eyes to what was really going on, and just to bring that up to an analogy today, I think we need that today. We need that to create space for more people to question, to get the answers to those questions, and to act on that and to join into the resistance. Let me keep it on the tip of...*

BA: Let me just briefly say here that I know from the other side of the equation, not being a soldier, but being someone who was actively protesting against the war in Vietnam at that point, that when people like yourself took courageous and what were genuinely heroic stands--if you want to talk about real heroes, the people who right from inside the military itself who had to pay a heavy price as you did, having to go to jail and everything for refusing orders to go to Vietnam or in other wars, and this happened on an increasingly large scale during Vietnam where it made a very important contribution and strengthened the struggle against that war.

It was a big inspiration and it really makes me laugh and at the same time angry when I hear all these people who are talking as if they know something about what happened during the struggle against the Vietnam War, as if well..."we" did terrible things. Speaking in the name of the anti-war movement, sometimes people who were never involved in it as a matter of fact, talk about how we did terrible things, we turned on the soldiers. But in fact in that movement, I know from my own personal experience as well as broader experience, whenever there were soldiers who were even beginning to question or even like sometimes you'd be--in the early days of the anti-Vietnam war struggle, I remember

being on the Berkeley campus and soldiers would come seek us out when they were on leave and get into arguments with us. We'd always engage them in hours of arguments. We didn't just spit on them and say "go away." We told them what they were doing was wrong. We told them what they were doing was immoral. We told them what they were doing was oppressive--but we argued with them--we didn't just say that. And we succeeded in winning over some, and then as developments increased and the broader movement developed and the war developed, it was a much broader number and that had a great impact, so it's kind of a back-and-forth positive feedback between those elements, and we always paid a great deal of attention to supporting any soldiers who would even question, especially those who would resist. But at the same time, we did openly tell the soldiers: "Shame on you. You are carrying out shameful actions. You're being ordered to do it but you should resist, just like other people are resisting in the military and people are resisting throughout the society and indeed even around the world."

CD: *Okay, let's get back to some of the questions that have come up, and I wanted to go deeper at this point into some of the views that people raised about why you can't build opposition to the war. And one particular thing that they raise in reference to that is that the people in this country feel that their safety is at issue and with people feeling like that, you're really going to alienate them if you're out there opposing the war, or opposing some of the things that the government is doing in the name of protecting the safety of those people. So I wonder what you think about that?*

BA: Well, first of all, for a moment to use the kind of language that Bush and the rest like to use, this is a kind of bargain with the devil. If you want to talk about who are the real evildoers in the world, it's U.S. imperialism, on a massive and monstrous scale, and you're making a Faustian...a bargain with the devil, a Faustian bargain, here to say, "I don't care what you do to the rest of the people in the world, I don't care what you've already done to them, I don't care what you do to reinforce and expand and deepen what you're doing to the people of the world, you can unleash any horrors on them and reinforce the horrors they're already going through and increase them and all the rest, as long as I'm safe." So...let's recognize that for what it is.

Second of all, it's grabbing hold of and embracing a dynamic that isn't even going to lead to even your own safety, because as Mao said, "Where there's oppression there's resistance." What, after all, called forth these events of September 11? Whatever Osama bin Laden is, and even accepting the fact that there are some of these reactionary, religious fundamentalist forces out there who are going to pursue their own objectives regardless of what other forces in the world do, the fact is that there is massive hatred for the U.S. government in particular around the world, and for what the U.S. does around the world. This is a fact and it's not a superficial thing. It's not just a whim on the part of people or some propaganda that's gotten them angry at the U.S. It's the result of repeated experience of what the U.S. government is already doing around the world, and it creates the basis for people to want to strike back. And...it is a question of what forms and under what banner, what program people are mobilized under to struggle against

this, whether it's a positive one or whether it's just another reactionary form like whatever's represented by Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, for example. But the more that they...this has already brought forth what's been happening in the world, including September 11, and to intensify this and expand it in the world is going to call forth more of the same, all over the world and very likely within the U.S. itself.

That is the nature of the deal. You can look at Israel, for example. And a number of people have pointed this out, that Israel...never mind the whole historical way in which they drove out the Palestinian people and stole their land in order to establish Israel in the first place, with the backing of particularly U.S. imperialism, but even in recent times, have the ways in which they brutally sought to suppress the uprising of the Palestinian people and murdered children throwing stones and killed hundreds of civilians themselves, has that made Israel a more stable and secure place, even accepting those perverse terms? And they are perverse. But even accepting those perverse terms, has that resulted in more safety for the people of Israel, or has it just resulted in things being even more volcanic, more volatile? The answer is obvious, and no matter how powerful U.S. imperialism is, it's going to call forth resistance to what it does, and the more that people in this country rally behind that--the banner of the U.S. government--and openly embrace it or at least say "go ahead, do what you will, whatever you think you have to do to make me safe" (of course that's not what the U.S. imperialists are doing it for) but the more that people allow themselves to passively accept it or openly support it in the name of their own safety, the more it's going to be difficult for people around the world to distinguish the American people from the American government. That's just a fact, and it's not going to lead to more safety. It's just going to lead to more madness in the world.

And so both on the moral level, in terms of what stand you're taking--and if you take that stand of "protect me any way you will, I don't care what you do to people all over the world"--there is the fundamental immorality or reactionary nature of that, on the one hand, and also just in practical terms it's not going to lead to the result you think it will, because the U.S. imperialists have their own agenda and it's not protecting you. The only thing they care about is maintaining the stability of their rule within the U.S. as a base for their whole international system. They don't care about the safety of the people in the U.S. If they did, their police wouldn't be out shooting down people, particularly in the ghettos and barrios, by the hundreds every year. They wouldn't be brutally attacking any kind of opposition to them. That's not their agenda. That's not what they're concerned about, and it's not what's going to result from all this either.

CD: *Okay, there's one more question. It's not so much raised by people who are saying you can't resist, but it is raised in relation to what terms should your resistance be on. And that's the view that exists that--I guess the way to characterize it is that, as you go out and build opposition to the war, you have to condemn terrorism equally in order to get a hearing from the American public. I wonder if you'd respond to that.*

BA: Well, first of all, again it goes back to the terms of getting a hearing. You get a hearing by telling the truth. You get a hearing by bringing out the reality as sharply as you can. As the experience of Vietnam shows, or the civil rights movement, the Black liberation struggle that developed out of it, or any other really significant struggle in society shows, people's attitudes toward things get changed by people who are oppressed and resisting oppression and taking a clear-cut stand and seeking to rally others to support for them, but not pitching what they do to the lowest common denominator.

For example, the Watts rebellion in 1965 raised for a whole broad section of white people, including in the middle class, profound questions about why would people go to such lengths, because people were getting killed by the police and everything else in the rebellion (as well as before it). I was working in an office at that particular time--full of typical office workers--and I was amazed by the level of questioning and even support there was from people that I would never have expected it from. People were saying things like, "Well what do you think they're going to do? What would you do in their place if you were being treated like this by the police and discriminated against?" I was rather positively surprised. The response to massive outpourings of resistance is not always that positive, but there's a profound truth there that when people resist and rebel, they do call--that's one of the most powerful ways to cause people to change their minds, but then of course you have to get out and talk with them and find various ways of bringing out what's actually going on and what are the real terms of the struggle and what the different forces involved in the struggle and confronting each other actually represent. But again, the actions of people go a long way toward at least raising profound questions and laying the basis to change people's thinking.

That's one important principle. So, we don't go out and pitch things to the lowest common denominator because then you never bring forward something more advanced; you're always going to be pivoting things around whatever is the more backward thinking. At the same time, you have to have an opening to very broadly win over people. You always have to have an orientation of winning over as many as you can win over and uniting as many as you can to unite by taking a clear and firm stand and openly manifesting and finding various ways to make your stand felt in terms of people being mobilized around that stand. That's the most effective way to win over people who may not be supportive, or who may have a more backward position. So that's kind of a general principle.

On the specific point about terrorism, if we're going to condemn terrorism, then first of all, applying any objective criteria--of course the U.S. imperialists have their standard of terrorism, it's whatever they say it is. "Terrorism is whatever we say it is and it isn't whatever we say it isn't." So, for example, the government of Turkey--that's not a terrorist state, even though they've slaughtered and bombed and devastated whole peoples and areas of the Kurdish regions within Turkey. They're not a terrorist state, but Saddam Hussein who did some of the same things to Kurdish people inside Iraq, well he's an oppressor, he's a tyrant and he's a despot, he's a terrorist. But if you take a more objective standard of terrorism and if you say something along the lines of it has to do

with deliberately targeting civilians for attack and destruction, in order to achieve political ends, and you apply that standard, well then there's no terrorist that comes close in the present world to U.S. imperialism, to the U.S. government. Just look around the world. What do you want to go back to? Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Or you want to go to Vietnam? Or Korea before that? Or do you want to look at what they did in Indonesia, pulling off a coup and slaughtering hundreds of thousands of people, or whether you want to talk about Chile, or whether you want to talk about what they did in El Salvador, or invading Panama where they bombed civilian districts, poor districts of the city, or Iraq killing all the civilians through the bombing and the destruction of the infrastructure and now the sanctions? There's nobody that even comes close. So, if we're going to condemn terrorism by an objective standard, we should put the U.S. imperialists at the very top, and nobody even comes close, and we need to make that clear.

Second of all, when the U.S. imperialists are not of course identifying themselves as terrorists and not targeting themselves for military attack but are proclaiming for themselves the right to label anyone else a terrorist and attack them, then we have to be very careful in how we respond to the use of the word "terrorism" or "terrorist." We have to clearly make distinctions.

For example, when I was talking earlier about Colin Powell and Nepal--the Nepalese government taking their cue from the U.S., and the U.S. in supporting them, in labeling that revolutionary People's War there as "terrorist," when in fact it's a military struggle being overwhelmingly directed against the police forces and army of the oppressive state there and is mobilizing thousands and has the active support and involvement of millions of people there--they're labeling that terrorist. Well, if we just go around condemning terrorism in general, given that the U.S. imperialists have the domination of the means of public opinion making, we're going to be playing into their hands. We can't make general condemnations of terrorism...and we have to distinguish between revolutionary struggles, righteous struggles of the people rising up, including through waging warfare to cast off their oppression, and acts that only fortify or reinforce oppression or seek to substitute one form of oppression for another and which in the process target civilians, or don't care if civilians are hit along with other targets they may have.

So we have to draw all those distinctions, but those are things we can discuss and should discuss in the course of building resistance, and we can struggle about it within our own ranks (the ranks of the resistance movement) broadly as we're building that resistance, but we have to keep the spearhead clearly directed politically against the main oppressors and, by any objective standards, the main terrorists in the world--which is, for the people of the U.S., our own government, the U.S. imperialists. That's where we have to direct the spearhead, and we can't put anything else on an equal level or condemn them without distinction in the same sentence, or fail to identify and distinguish between the U.S. imperialists and other forces that oppose them--and among the forces that oppose them, we need a concrete analysis of what they actually represent and what their methods actually are, and what their objectives actually are; and many we should

support, such as the Maoists in Nepal, waging a war of liberation, of People's War, mobilizing the people against the army and police forces of a reactionary regime and system. And people like the Taliban or Osama bin Laden we obviously do not support-- and in fact we should support the Maoists in Afghanistan as well.

Now, some people are not going to agree with us about supporting people's wars and supporting the Maoists, but that's the point of unity-struggle-unity within the broad movement. We are a revolutionary party. We support the revolutionary struggles of the people, particularly where they are led by Maoist forces, by MLM forces, by genuine communists, but we should have as a broad point of unity within the movement of resistance to clearly distinguish and identify the U.S. imperialists as the greatest perpetrators of terrorism by any objective standards, and more than that the greatest perpetrators of reactionary wars and oppression.

CD: *So, what kind of movement is it going to take to take on and beat back this juggernaut of war and repression that's been unleashed on the people of the world?*

BA: Well, I think we've been talking about elements of that, and you've been talking about some of your experience in building that movement. It's got to be one that unites (we've discussed this somewhat already) people as broadly as possible and brings forward all the many people who are even just questioning or have concerns now and brings them forward to active opposition, and it has to be one that makes room and gives rise to many diverse forms of struggle and mobilization in opposition to this juggernaut around many different aspects of it-- obviously the war, but also the attacks within the U.S. on immigrants, the profiling of people from Arab and Islamic countries, the attacks on people's rights within the U.S., the heightening repression. It has to include all those fronts and it has to unite people of a broad diversity around-- in opposition to--all this, and into the various fronts of it. And it has to include unity-struggle- unity among its ranks about what are the key things to be taking up at any given time and how to mobilize people around them, but it also has to have a very clear basis of unity that draws the lines correctly so that the greatest number of people can be potentially mobilized--not so that it appeals to the greatest number right now, but so that it provides the basis to mobilize and win over and activate the broadest number of people to (as I was just speaking to) actually direct their spearhead of struggle against the U.S. government and the U.S. imperialists--or however people conceive of it and call it, but the U.S. government in its whole warfare, open-ended warfare, and its whole juggernaut of war and repression.

We have to draw the lines politically and establish the basic unity politically so that the spearhead of the struggle, if you want to put it that way, is directed in that way and not confused or muddled with secondary questions, or putting other forces on a par with the U.S. government. As I've just spoken to, it's the U.S. government that's far and away the major force of oppression and fortifying exploitation and imperialist domination in the

world. We have to be able to draw those lines clearly and then we have to go out to unite people as broadly as possible around those basic points of unity and that clear demarcation of whom our struggle has to be directed against.

And this movement will contain many diverse streams, many different kinds of activities, many different opinions and points of view about many questions, including the ultimate solution to all this, as well as obviously healthy contention and struggle and debate and engagement and dialogue about all these questions and also about how to build this movement most effectively and how to deal with different questions that arise in the course of building this movement. But it's got to be a vibrant movement that has this potential to unite people very broadly and call forth people. At the same time, it has to have a clear-cut stand and particularly this is important for people in the U.S. The September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center were not done in the name of the American people. What the U.S. government has done in response is being done in the name of the American people, so that emphasizes all the more where the people in the U.S. have to direct their energy and their struggle in terms of who has to be the target politically of that struggle--as I said, where the spearhead of that struggle has to be directed against--along with the fact that the U.S. government is in reality the major perpetrator of oppression and devastation and destruction of the environment and of people throughout the world.

CD: *Okay, you just made the point about within the movement and as people resist they're going to be discussing and debating a number of questions, including discussing what's going to be the ultimate solution to this, and this is actually something that a lot of the people involved in this, particularly some of the youth, are actively engaged in now. We've been talking with people about building the kind of resistance that can take on and stop the war and the repression. And a number of the youth, particularly youth who have been involved in the anti-globalization movement and fighting back on other fronts before September 11, are taking up and building opposition to the war. But a question that they have raised is, "How can they make sure that as they build a movement of resistance to the war, it doesn't stop once the war is stopped?" And some of them are even looking back on the experience coming out of Vietnam and saying to us, in a certain sense, challenging us, but I think in a good way, "You guys were part of building a massive movement against the Vietnam War that was part of stopping it and you succeeded in that part of things, but the same government that was responsible for the Vietnam War remained in place, is still in place now, and now we're up against this--this war on terrorism that's without end and not limited by geography, and this repressive clampdown, so how are we going to build a movement this time that doesn't just do the first part, but not get on to doing something about the rest of it?" So I think that's a very good question and I'd like to get your thoughts on it.*

BA: Well, first of all, on one level, there will be plenty of challenges for us and plenty to do in terms of taking on and stopping this whole war and repression juggernaut--that's going to be a major challenge in its own right, so there will be plenty to do on that level. But it is--I agree with you, this is an important and profound question that people are pointing to more broadly. It has to do with the very nature of the system. The U.S.

imperialists suffered a defeat in Vietnam. The Vietnamese people and the people of the world played a key role in that, particularly the war of liberation waged by the Vietnamese people in which they sacrificed tremendously, and people in the U.S. who built opposition to that war also contributed in important ways to what was a righteous and well deserved defeat for U.S. imperialism, so we see that you can have an impact. That was not something that the U.S. imperialists gave up lightly, the war in Vietnam. They finally decided they had to retreat there out of consideration for more strategic interests they had at play and also reckoning that this was not a war that they could win or even attempt to win without bringing down a whole other set of more serious and profound problems for themselves and challenges to their system. So, it shows that tremendous struggle can be built and in fact you can derail even a major thrust of the imperialists.

And this juggernaut of imperialist war and repression *can* be derailed, can be thwarted, but it's going to take a tremendous effort, and it can be thwarted and derailed, in my opinion, even short of making revolution. Or, put it this way: It would be wrong to say that only by overthrowing U.S. imperialism would it be possible to derail or seriously obstruct this juggernaut, this particular juggernaut of war and repression. But, at the same time, again people are pointing to something very profound. I mean, look at the experience of Vietnam--and the system is still here. Or, as I pointed to earlier, the Cold War is over, but where's the Peace Dividend? This is the nature of the system we're dealing with, and the problem is not that a powerful movement wasn't built or that in the end it didn't mean anything, or it didn't have any effect or impact or wasn't important, didn't contribute anything. That's not the problem. That movement was tremendously important and did have a big effect and contributed a lot, but the problem is also not that it went too far or got too radical. The problem was that actually the movement wasn't able to reach far enough at that time.

A lot of people were talking about revolution and revolution was in the air, but as we know there wasn't a successful revolution. The same system tactically retreated and regrouped. Then it brought forward everything it brought forward with Reagan and everything else--not Reagan the person but what he represented in terms of where the system was going and how it was carrying out its interests in the world--and it's gone down to the present time and we're in this whole juggernaut that they're unleashing now. So, why? Because the people's struggles are ineffectual? Because this can't have any impact? Because it really doesn't mean anything? NO, because ultimately as long as the same system is in effect and in power, this is what it's going to bring forth. Throughout the world, you can see the horrors that it's brought forth (some of which I tried to touch on briefly before) and which it enforces throughout the world. It doesn't put its money and its attention and its resources and its efforts into solving AIDS or poverty or starvation or disease. It puts it into reinforcing the conditions of global exploitation that give rise to and reinforce those things.

So until this system is toppled and replaced by a revolutionary system that can actually represent and act in the interests of and bring forward the masses of people to transform society, we will be faced with--even if we derail this juggernaut, we will be faced with the imperialists regrouping and doing the same thing again. This is what we can learn even not just from history in general but even history from the last couple of decades that people like ourselves have lived through, not only literally but politically. This is from Vietnam and all the struggles of that time to the present. This is what we have to learn out of this--that it's important to build resistance, to unite people broadly, to call forward a powerful movement to set out to stop and derail this juggernaut and actually to strive to do so, and again I do think that's possible (or may be possible) short of revolution. But short of revolution, nothing fundamental will change and yet more horrors will continue and be called forth in a concentrated way as is happening now.

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