P&P WORKERS POWER
BRITAIN
BCM BOX 7750
LONDON WC1N 3XX

workers power

revolution against global capitalism

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When war begins... PROTEST!

There will be a vigil in Trafalgar Square, London and at town centres across Britian...

Vigil 7pm if war begins

Get organised - phone 07730 220962

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WE CAN STOP THIS WAR!

THE 11 September attacks were an atrocity. The killing of thousands of working people in the name of the struggle against US imperialism was a sick, futile act - and socialists condemn it.

But the war that is set to be unleashed from the ruins of the Pentagon will kill and maim thousands more innocent victims.

Blair and Bush's war aim is not simply to "end terror": it is to end resistance to global capitalism's domination of the world

That's why tens of thousands of people across the globe have come together to oppose the war.

The American press has asked the question: "why do they hate us". But few in the establishment can stomach the answer.

The system of global exploitation that is run from Wall Street is one, long organised atrocity.

Hunger and preventable disease kill thousands of children every day in the poorest countries of the world. Heavily indebted countries spend more on debt repayment than on education and health. And the USA's puppets - the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organisation - are on a mission to rip away every obstacle to cheap labour and privatisation.

But global capitalism does not just kill by starvation and disease. The USA backs torture regimes and terror groups across the globe.

It backs the death squads in Colombia. It backs the Israeli murder machine against the Palestinians. It even backed bin Laden when his fascist terror groups were useful in the fight against the Soviet Union.

To point to all these facts is not to justify the September 11 attacks - but it does justify the mass movement to prevent imperialist war - a movement that must unite workers, refugees and peace campaigners in the developed countries with the mass struggles against imperialism that are raging from Palestine to the Phillipines.

The attack on the World Trade Centre has given Bush and Blair every excuse they need to step up repression against liberation movements in the Middle East and around the world

It has set the stage for a crackdown on civil rights, on refugee rights, on media freedom.

And it has allowed the West's rulers a free hand in the class struggle. As George W Bush gave a billion dollar handout to the airlines, the airline bosses were preparing to sack 90,000 - many without redundancy pay or benefits.

In Britain, those who called for the TUC to keep up the fight against privatisation were denounced as "traitors" - and the GMB union has already called off its million pound publicity campaign against privatisation. And Gordon Brown has warned there will be spending cuts to pay for all the bombs and bullets.

But the class struggle will go on.

And it is no longer just a struggle against privatisation and poverty. Bush has drawn the line - you're either for us or against us. And Blair has rushed preening to his side.

Well sorry, Tony Blair: the millions of workers who voted Labour did not vote for a US-led military rampage across Asia and the Middle East.

We need mass action, uniting trade unionists, peace campaigners, refugee groups and the anti-capitalist movement to stop the war. If we fail there will be a decade of carnage.

IN THE immediate aftermath of the World Trade Centre attack there was talk, in Washington, of carpet bombing and even nuclear strikes. Now it seems the USA is taking a subtler approach. But it's just as dangerous.

The "hawks" in the Bush regime - and many on the US right - wanted to unleash armageddon, not just on Afghanistan but on all the "rogue states" who will not play ball with US domination: Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya and North Korea. They even threatened strikes against Pakistan.

But a different strategy has now emerged: the "ten year war on terror". Far from representing "restraint" or moderation, this strategy is designed to deliver an even more complete US triumph over the peoples of the Third World.

The USA is busy constructing a coalition with some of the worst dictatorships in the world.

Jack Straw was sent on an errand to kiss the backside of the Iranian dictatorship that has killed tens of thousands of workers, students and peasants.

US diplomats are showering favours on the military dictatorship in Pakistan. Musharraf's right wing junta can have debt relief and even its own nuclear weaponry in return for siding with the US.

Russia has been given the nod to carry on massacring and raping muslims in Chechnya in return for its support.

The imperialists are operating the old Vietnam war maxim: "They may be sons of bitches but they're *our* sons of bitches". As a result, those struggling for democracy and human rights across the globe will now be on the receiving end of unbridled repression.

Instead of carpet bombing, we will likely see massive air strikes, commando raids and a prolonged "dirty war" against Islamic movements.

The reason the USA has to adopt its "pinpoint" tactics is not the small size of bin Laden or the Taliban's forces.

It is because of the massive scale of opposition and resentment to imperialist rule.

continued overleaf

- **Reject individual terrorism and civilian massacres as a method of struggle against imperialism**
- **Defend Arabs and muslims against racist attack and state harassment**
- **Reject ID cards, fast-track extradition and increased surveillance powers**
- **Keep the anti-capitalism movement going - unite the fight against globalisation and imperialist war**
- **Defend any country or people targeted for revenge attacks by the USA and NATO**
- **Imperialist troops out of the Middle East now**
- **Solidarity with the Palestinian people - victory to the Intifada**
- **No let up in the class struggle: carry on the fight against privatisation**
- **No state bail outs for the private bosses: nationalise crisis-hit industries to save jobs and communities.**

Hands off Afghanistan! Troops out now!

...continued from front

Precisely because they fear the transformation of resentment and opposition into mass resistance they know Cruise missiles are not enough

Imperialism's "smart weapons" against revolution are well known and all too effective. They include police repression, deportation, torture, censorship and death squads. They include puppet leaders of mass movements and client states - traitors like Arafat and the Jordanian monarchy. They include tame Labour and trade union leaders who will agree to suspend the class struggle for the duration of war.

That's why we must be clear: imperialism's target is not just a few Islamic fascists. It is the whole global resistance to capitalism that is in the crosshairs of the Washington offensive.

And whether liberals and pacifists in the west like it or not - the masses of the Third World will fight back.

If the workers' movement does not head up the resistance it will be led by radical right-wing Islamic movements, from Egypt to Pakistan to the Phillipines.

Because of this - and because of the terrible price the imperialists will extract from a global victory – the working class and socialist movements must put themselves at the head of anti-imperialist resistance.

The workers' movement in Britain must combine mourning for US workers who died on 11 September with commemorating the innocent victims of US foreign policy in Latin America, the Balkans, the Middle East and across the globe.

The best way to protect the ordinary people of the USA and the other imperialist countries against further attacks is to launch a mass movement to stop the war drive, protect ethnic minorities and defend civil rights.

That includes giving active support the Palestinian struggle against Israeli reoccupation of cities and towns in the West Bank.

The anti- war movement of the 1960s and 1970s must be our model. It acted, along with the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people, as a major deterrent to US military aggression for years.

There already exists a vibrant mass movement against global capitalism. It has summit hopped its way into history, paralysing the imperialist economic diplomacy and shaking the confidence of the system's apologists.

Now that movement - which had begun to unite with organised workers sporadically and tentatively - must do two things:

- sink deeper roots into working class communities
- come out openly against the war and organise direct action to hinder the war machine.

The task of the moment is to prevent the imperialist attack. Blair's ministers have been quietly shocked by the size and immediacy of the anti-war response. And we've only just started.

But what do we do when the shooting war begins?

In the Malvinas war and the 1991 Gulf War, sadly, the peace movement disappeared from the streets. It was intimidated by the media backlash and refused to clearly take a stand against the imperialist attack. Sadly, history tells us pacifism is not much use during wars.

Those who want to free the world from global capitalism must take a stand against the armies and the death squads of global capitalism.

That means, in the first place, unequivocal support for the Palestinian intifada. It means support for mass movements against the war - even if those movements are led by anti-democratic Islamic groups in places like Lebanon and Egypt. The workers movement must raise its own voice and insist on its right to protest - it must not stand on the sidelines.

In Britain and the other imperialist countries we must oppose the coming attack on Afghanistan. Not just bemoan it: oppose it.

So delicately poised are the niceties of US diplomacy that the Bush regime is not even overtly committed to overthrowing the Taliban government. Even if it does, its plan for a UN-backed government led by the ageing King will guarantee non-Taliban clerics the right to go on imposing poverty, hunger and ignorance on the people of Afghanistan.

Does opposing an attack on Afghanistan mean siding with the Taliban? No. The progressive defence of Afghanistan against imperialism goes hand in hand with the fight to overthrow the Taliban.

The job of overthrowing the Taliban belongs to the Afghan people - not Washington or Moscow, the original authors of the misery.

And it is not the Taliban, or bin Laden that can throw imperialism out of the region - it is the power of ordinary workers and peasants.

The first military strike against Afghanistan must be the signal for a generalised protest across the region: strikes, the occupation of roads and the blockade of US military installations can paralyse the Pentagon warmongers.

Workers across the globe must stand with the ordinary people of Afghanistan against the military onslaught.

The events of 11 September show that globalisation, and the USA's domination of the world, are not heralding a new era of peace and plenty.

We are entering a period of dramatic instability, in which the hatred and revulsion engendered by imperialist policy, global inequality and national oppression, rouse individuals to acts of desperate violence as well as to mass resistance.

The USA is sowing the seeds of further conflicts to come, ensuring that the 21st Century will be at least as violent and bloody as the last.

The World Trade Centre attack sent shockwaves through the world economy - but it did not cause the recession that is about to be unleashed. Capitalism itself is the root cause of economic misery.

To the miseries of repression and war we are about to see added, quite possibly, a prolonged and co-ordinated global recession.

But another world is possible.

A world without racism, war and unpredictable terror can only come about if we attack the root causes.

And the root cause is capitalism.

Capitalism sucks wealth from ordinary people to feed a privileged layer of rich businessmen. Capitalism dooms humanity to crisis and war.

Socialism means taking away their wealth and power and putting society under the control of the working class. It means allocating resources according to need, not the profit motive.

To get socialism we need a workers revolution.

And revolution - not "terror" - is the biggest fear that stalks the Whitehouse and Downing Street. Our rulers know that every world war has resulted in huge revolutionary upheavals.

They told themselves that, with the collapse of the corrupt, decrepit Soviet bureaucracy they had seen the "end of history". But history has returned, big time.

Of course, as in all wars, there will be a wave of patriotism when "our boys" go in. Just as surely there will be a wave of revulsion when some of these young people come back in body bags while Blair, Brown and Straw sit smugly thousands of miles from the action.

Revulsion will turn to anger as worker realise it is they who are having to pay the price: through spending cuts, job losses and curtailed civil liberties.

Millions will realise that the war Blair and Bush have unleashed against "terror" is in fact a war against democracy and social justice.

Globalisation, indebtedness, poverty and the rule of military tyrants are the real payload on the warheads of the cruise missiles they will aim at Kabul, Baghdad or Khartoum.

That's why socialists are determined to turn the struggle against the war into a struggle against the system that has spawned it.

Shoulder to shoulder, workers and young people across the globe, we can stop this war.

When Washington backed bin Laden

Washington and Whitehall, gave support to both the Taliban and bin Laden when it suited their own political ends.

Six months before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 the US commenced covert aid to Islamic fundamentalist guerrillas in Afghanistan who were fighting the Kabul government. The Soviet backed regime had launched a land reform and literacy programme. The then National Security Adviser in the US, Zbigniew Brzezinski, commented:"We didn't push the Russians to intervene but we consciously increased the probability that they would do so. This secret operation was an excellent idea. Its effect was to draw the Russians into the Afghan trap. You want me to regret that?"

He said this in 1998, two years into the Taliban's reign of terror and after two decades of war and destruction had devastated an entire people. No regrets.

The Islamic fundamentalists it is now railing against could not have won without massive US support. Throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s, the CIA, according to official figures, gave $6 billion of military aid to the Mojahedeen. The CIA and Britain supplied engineers and advisers to help bin Laden build his bases. His fighters, together with Afghans, were trained at the High Rock rifle club in Connecticut and a CIA training camp called "The Farm" in Williamsburg.

Bin Laden's former organisation, the MAK, received considerable support from the CIA, as did seven different factions of the Afghan Mojahedeen. Crucially the US supplied the rebels with US Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, a factor that many observers point to as the turning point in the Afghan/Soviet war.

Senator Orrin Hatch, a senior Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, commented on all of this: "It was worth it. Those were very important pivotal matters that played an important role in the downfall of the Soviet Union."

This is what Blair and Bush want us to forget that as they drape themselves in the flag of "civilisation" and prepare for a war on their former friends and allies. We won't forget it. We will shout it from the roof tops.

The triumph of the Taliban itself was only possible thanks to the support of the US and Pakistani secret services. It was they - wanting an end to the civil war - who organised and trained the Taliban militia and facilitated their transport from the religious schools of Pakistan into Afghanistan.

Immediately after the Taliban took Kabul the US started to build friendly relations with them in order to enlist their support in the "war on drugs".

So, when the Taliban said last spring that they would stamp out heroin production the US rewarded them with a $43 million aid package. This took the US total aid to the Taliban above the $450 million level and Washington the single biggest sponsor of a regime it now claims to be totally opposed to.

This took place a mere four months before 11 September and was justified by a senior US State Department envoy to the region because, in Washington's words "the Taliban used a system of consensus building."

The US used the Afghan fundamentalists and bin Laden for their own purposes. Now, to build a coalition against bin Laden, they are allying with other despots and torturers across the world. Imperialism is hypocritical to the core.

How the Taliban came to power

From 1978 to 1992 Afghanistan was ruled by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). From 1980 to 1989 this was a puppet government Soviet Armed Forces who had invaded the country in late 1979.

However, after the Soviet withdrawal, the PDPA demonstrated that it did have a serious social base in Afghanistan (in the towns and above all in the army) by surviving the huge imperialist backed onslaught of an Islamic fundamentalist coalition, the Mojahedeen. But in 1992, after the collapse of Stalinism and the end of Russian aid, the PDPA regime collapsed and Islamic reaction triumphed.

But that was far from the end of the Afghan tragedy. The country - which had already suffered over one million deaths and the displacement of around five million refugees - was plunged into a new civil war, this time between Islamic factions, within a month of the new regime coming to power.

One of the factions, the Taliban - Students of Islamic Knowledge Movement - took the Afghan capital, Kabul, in 1996, and today controls between 80 and 90 per cent of the country.

It remains at war with its former allies - who it calls "Communist-Shi'ite Confederation" - who now comprise the Northern Alliance. This alliance is not "communist" at all. It is an Islamic alliance, though it does have the support of Afghanistan's Shi'ite Muslim minority who have fled from persecution by the Sunni Muslim Taliban.

From the moment it captured Kabul, the Taliban demonstrated that it was, above all else, a monstrous reactionary force, a kind of clerical fascism. Its strict interpretation of the Sharia (Islamic law) was based on the teachings of an eighteenth century extremist sect, the Deobandi school. It combined this with backward tribal laws and customs of the Pashtuns (the largest, though not majority nationality in Afghanistan).

Women bore the brunt of this reaction. Education was closed to all girls. A strict dress code designed to make women invisible was enforced with terrible brutality. Women died in their thousands because the Taliban decreed that they were not allowed to be treated by male doctors.

Society as a whole was hurled backwards. Every trace of modernity - from television sets to cassette recorders - was wiped out. Resistance is met with terror from the 20,000 strong Taliban militia. The Ministry for the Enforcement of Virtue and Suppression of Vice ensures that every aspect of private and public life is conducted in accordance with the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic law. Public executions or dismemberment are common.

This regime enjoys virtually no popular support. Refugees have fled in their hundreds and thousands - only to be imprisoned or deported by the western democracies in which they have sought sanctuary.

Under the Taliban Afghanistan's desperate economic plight grows worse. Millions face starvation. Industry has been all but destroyed. A land of 26 million people rich in mineral wealth, natural gas and - in the north - fertile arable land, is dying under the both the repression and economic incompetence of the Taliban.

Bin Laden rose to prominence by organising an Arab Mojahedeen to help in the war against Soviet Russia. After that war he was expelled from Saudi Arabia, was based briefly in Sudan and then returned to Afghanistan in 1996.

His own stated goal is "to unite Muslims and establish a government which follows the rule of the Caliphs" and his organisation, Al Qa'ida (the Base), is committed to a "Jihad (holy war) against the Jews and Crusaders".

Anybody who can find an ounce of "progressive anti-imperialism" in this sort of thinking - and in the attacks on civilians that bin Laden's al Qa'ida network has carried out - must have truly amazing eyesight!

Afghanistan is in the grip of clerical fascist terror, its people face yet more horror and catastrophes. Imperialism's planned onslaught on the country will, quite simply, make things a thousand times worse.

More innocent people will be slaughtered as the cruise missiles rain down and the commandos lay waste villages. Refugees will die in their thousands, holed up in the living hell of makeshift camps on the Iranian and Pakistani borders.

There will be nothing progressive in the war waged by imperialism, just as there is nothing progressive in the rule of the Taliban and the terror campaign of bin Laden.

Imperialism must be defeated, but so too must the Taliban be overthrown and its leaders, along with bin Laden, brought to account by the Afghan people themselves.