

US democracy summits a ploy to boost power

They're a way of dividing countries into puppets that are with them and enemies that aren't, Fred M'membe says on Beijing TV

Socialist staff reporter

THE UNITED States' so-called Democracy Conference in Lusaka at the end of last month was shameful, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

Interviewed on China Global Television Network in Beijing, Dr M'membe said countries that hosted the democracy summits were puppets fooled into siding with the US.

"They don't hide their ambition," he told CGTN presenter Xu Qintuo. "They say it very clearly, you're either with us or not with us. What does it mean to be with them? To be with them means to do their will, to live according to their dictates. When they say jump, you jump."

"If you don't then you are not with them. These summits are there to divide the world between those who they call dictatorships, who are not with them, and those they call democracies, who are with them. If you are with them you are not a dictator – even if you are one. We have seen this in Africa."

"We had Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. For how long did they sustain him? Mobutu had no elections, Mobutu squandered the resources of his country, he was still their man. It didn't matter."

"They had their puppet regime in South Africa, they were their friends. Were their puppets in South Africa democratic? They had the white minority racist regime in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. They were their friends, they supported them. Was that a democratic regime? Was there a democratic dispensation in Rhodesia? They supported Pinochet in Chile, who toppled

an elected government with their assistance."

And in a keynote speech to more than 300 guests, scholars, and experts from over 100 countries and regions attending The Second International Forum on Democracy – The Shared Human Values in Beijing, Dr M'membe said the US and its Western allies, "Killed so many of our leaders in Africa and other parts of the world. The killers of Patrice Lumumba, those who toppled Kwame Nkrumah, those who killed Nasser, those who killed Muammar Gaddafi, today are coming to teach us about democracy."

"A country that has been built on brutal force, on the enslavement of other human beings, on the humiliation and exploitation of Africans, the plunder of Africa, today is coming to teach us about democracy."

Fred M'membe's GGTN interview in full – Pages 6/7

"That's the arrogance, the imperialist arrogance, the racist arrogance that we are subjected to. We cannot have democracy where there is hegemony of the strongest, mightiest, imperialist power. We cannot have democracy where a country's resources, a country's decisions are dictated to by another country. A country that is dominated by another country cannot be democratic, a country that lacks sovereignty cannot be democratic, a people who cannot decide for themselves cannot be democratic. A colony and neocolony cannot be democratic."

In a Facebook post, Dr M'membe said the democracy conference was another case of being fooled by the imperialist power.

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CGTN
Socialist Party President Fred M'membe gives a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of The Second International Forum on Democracy – The Shared Human Values, in Beijing

If we struggle we will win

PRESIDENT of the Socialist Party Fred M'membe gave a speech in Beijing at the opening ceremony of The Second International Forum on Democracy – The Shared Human Values, organised jointly by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and think tanks from Cambodia, Chile, Nigeria, Spain and Tonga.

More than 300 guests, scholars, and experts from over 100 countries and regions attended the forum in person or virtually to discuss democracy and sustainable development, democracy and innovation, democracy and global governance, democracy and the diversity of human civilisation, and democracy and the path to modernisation.

This is what Dr M'membe said:

IN A truly fair, free and peaceful world, democracy takes many forms of expression, not only one. I believe democracy is a government in which all the people participate, in which the

interests of the people reign supreme, in which the country's sovereignty, the country's honour, is at the top.

This month is a month of democracy discourse in the world. At the end of this month, there'll be a conference in Lusaka, or a summit in Lusaka, Zambia, my country, led by the United States. They have come to southern Africa to teach us democracy: a country that was opposed to our liberation, a country that supported colonial regimes – their puppet regime in South Africa, the white racist minority regime in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, the Portuguese colonial governments in Mozambique, in Angola, in Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde – today is coming to Africa to teach us about democracy.

A country that has toppled so many governments in Africa, that has led so many coups in Africa and other parts of the world, a country that has killed

so many of our leaders in Africa and other parts of the world, the killers of Patrice Lumumba, those who toppled Kwame Nkrumah, those who killed Nasser, those who killed Muammar Gaddafi, today are coming to teach us about democracy. A country that has been built on brutal force, on the enslavement of other human beings, on the humiliation of Africans, the exploitation of Africans, the plunder of Africa, today is coming to teach us about democracy.

That's the arrogance, the imperialist arrogance, the racist arrogance that we are subjected to. We cannot have democracy where there is hegemony of the strongest, mightiest, imperialist power. We cannot have democracy where a country's resources, a country's decisions are dictated to by another country. A country that is dominated by another country cannot be democratic, a country that lacks sovereignty

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Political violence is a sign of failure

UPND cadres' attack on PF supporters 'inhuman'

THE VIOLENCE of UPND cadres against PF supporters in Copperbelt Province on youth day shows what happens when people defend a leadership that has failed them and the Zambian people, Socialist Party Copperbelt youth league provincial training coordinator Joseph Kangwa says.

"These are poor, ignorant and vulnerable youths," he said. "They are the tools of political violence, paid with petty things like alcohol to spill blood. They have no say or role in shaping Zambia."

Kangwa said the violence between UPND and PF youths at the Wusakile roundabout while waiting for President Hakainde Hichilema, who was on his way to Arthur Davies Stadium in Kitwe, was "an embarrassment to UPND party leaders". It resulted in a number of injuries.

"This inhuman behaviour is a clear indication that UPND is a party anchored on violence," he said.

"It is sad that due to scarce employment, a lack of empowerment and poor access to tertiary education because of high tuition fees, youths from underprivileged families have lost their fundamental identity – the meaning of who they are."

"We have many youths who are young men in form only, whose souls have long evaporated in the cadreism industry."

"My heart bleeds to see how UPND youths have mastered the art of loyalty and suffering for crumbs. They sing songs of praise and defend the leadership when it is clear it has failed them and Zambia."

Kangwa said UPND cadres' close proximity to the leadership had given them a false sense of power and made them feel immune to the lawful outcomes of their actions.

"They can break the laws on



Injuries caused by UPND cadres at Wusakile roundabout in Kitwe, Copperbelt Province



behalf of their masters without having to worry about being prosecuted," he said.

"Our fellow youths in the UPND and PF should realise that the current capitalist governance system is unsustainable and does not acknowledge the value of youth."

"If we youths seriously want to solve the pressing issues of employment and empowerment, restore our identity and be a part of decision-making, there is a need for a full withdrawal from cadreism."

"We need to detach ourselves from activities that involve characters who see us young people as useless beings who can be called upon to help spill blood and later be discarded."

"Let us be proactive. We are the future leaders of today," he said.



Above: SP women from Serenje celebrate International Women's Day. Below: Members of the Socialist Party Youth League

Celebrating women and young people

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day and Youth Day were celebrated last month on March 8 and 12 respectively, with the Socialist Party campaigning for a more just, fair and humane society for both.

Socialist Party President Fred M'membe said women came back with the same banners and demands they carry and make on Women's Day calling for:

- A gender equal world.
- A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination.
- A world that's diverse, equitable, and inclusive.
- A world where difference is valued and celebrated.

"On this day let's commit ourselves to coming together to forge women's equality," Dr M'membe said. "Let's collectively embrace equality, celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness about discrimination, and take action to drive gender parity."

"International Women's Day belongs to all of us, to everyone, everywhere. Inclusion means all International Women's Day action is valid."

"We join all of you in celebrating International Women's Day under the 2023 theme DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality."

"A more just, fair and humane society is possible, but we have to struggle for it!"

Dr M'membe said that youth issues are brought to the attention of the nation "and we celebrate the potential of the young as partners in today's society" on Youth Day.

"On this day, we focus on young people and their place in society. And it's not just to protect them, but also to include them in the development of their communities," he said.

"This is because youths are not future leaders, but leaders of today. The future is not built in the future but on the threshold of the decisions and actions we take today."

"Focal areas for youth development and protection must include education, employment, and the environment."

"On this day we celebrate the qualities of young people and recognise the challenges that today's youth can face. We celebrate the contribution that young people make in education, employment, and social justice,

among other areas. We must care for our youth and show concern for the growth of the younger generation."

"Young people have to study and work, but they are at the age of physical growth. Therefore, full attention must be paid both to their work and study, and to their recreation, sport, and rest."

"Zambia is theirs, as well as ours, but in the last analysis, it is theirs. Young people, full of vigour and vitality, are in the bloom of life like the sun early in the morning. Our hope is placed in them. Zambia belongs to them. Zambia's future belongs to them."

"We must help all our young people to understand that ours is still a very poor country, that we cannot change this situation radically without taking revolutionary measures, and that only through the united efforts of our younger generation and all our people, working with their own hands, can Zambia be made strong and prosperous."

Dr M'membe said the establishment of the Socialist Party was opening up the road leading to the ideal society of the future, but to translate the ideal into reality needed hard work.



What type of Christians are these?

THERE is no doubt that Mr Hakainde Hichilema and many in the UPND have very good reasons to detest or even hate Mr Edgar Lungu. They were badly treated and brutalised by him and his regime, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"Mr Lungu was cruel to his opponents, to those who were not with him. I was a victim of his cruelty and that of his league. It's not easy to forget such things and forgive," he said in a Facebook post.

"But whenever anger and vengeance try to consume me I turn to Christ's teachings to recover my sense of humanity: 'But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven' (Matthew 5: 43-45)."

"It's very easy to love your friends and it doesn't need much effort. What's difficult is to love your en-

emies and that requires much effort, much humanity Mr Hichilema may harbour a lot of hatred and anger towards Mr Lungu and he is entitled to. But Mr Lungu is still a human being with human, constitutional, and legal rights."

"The statements Mr Hichilema is making against Mr Lungu as a result of what he sees as a desire or intention on his part to come back to active and elective politics border on inhumanity, unconstitutional conduct, lawlessness, and undemocratic behaviour. And it is contrary to Christian teachings, liberal democratic values, and the rule of law."

"What type of Christians and liberal democrats are these people?"

"Let Mr Lungu enjoy his rights to the full as long as he acts within the law. If the law allows him to stand in 2026 let him do so, and defeat him at the polls."

Will Zambia get 'debt resurrection'?

SRI LANKA has gained "debt redemption" from China – when is Zambia getting its "debt resurrection" from Beijing? Socialist Party President Fred M'membe asks in a Facebook post.

"China has agreed to help Sri Lanka restructure its debt repayment obligations and enable it to access International Monetary Fund 'bailout' finance," he said.

"Under the agreement, Sri Lanka will not have to repay the principal and interest during the period. China will not demand immediate repayment of debt from Sri Lanka for 2022 and 2023 and will expedite negotiations on medium- and long-term debt treatment."

Dr M'membe said the decision was made to help relieve the short-term debt repayment pressure on Sri Lanka and was part of China's efforts to

contribute to the debt sustainability of the country. Sri Lanka is currently facing its worst economic crisis in more than seven decades, and the shortage of dollars has disrupted the imports of essential goods. Last year, the situation worsened when protesters ousted a president.

"As at the end of 2022 it owed Chinese lenders US\$7.4 billion, which is almost a fifth of its public external debt."

"This development set the stage for final approval of the IMF's US\$2.9 billion, four-year 'bailout' for Sri Lanka on March 20."

"China will call on commercial creditors to provide debt treatment in an equally comparable manner and encourage multilateral creditors to make contributions to help Sri Lanka better respond to the crisis and emerge from it."

Kwacha in free fall is not just about debt

THE appreciation or strengthening of the Kwacha was the Alleluia – glory – of Mr Hakiende Hichilema and his UPND government, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

“Now that the Kwacha appears to be in free fall what's their new song. How do they explain it?” he asked in a Facebook post.

“Dr Situmbeko Musokotwane, Minister of Finance, says the Kwacha is depreciating due to delayed debt restructuring.

“There's definitely some truth in this. But it cannot be the sole reason for the Kwacha's free fall. There are definitely many other factors.

“Zambia's debt is not new, it hasn't just arisen. The Kwacha was, for some time, appreciating on the back of this national debt burden. It even went as low as K15.89 to the US Dollar under this government. But it is reaching K20.70 to the US Dollar under the same government.

“The truth is, there are interest rate increments in the countries where the money, which was being invested in Zambian government securities, was coming from. This is causing a flight back. Money is leaving Zambia and being taken to where interest rates are rising and risks are much lower.”

Dr M'membe said the changes in copper prices were also a factor. “A drop in copper prices means less US dollars collected by the government in all sorts of taxes. Oil prices have been rising. This means more US dollars are required to bring in our fuel requirements, putting more pressure on the US Dollar supply and further depreciating the Kwacha.

“Also, this situation is not being helped by the fact that the investment pledges Mr Hichilema has been talking about have not come in. For instance, Dubai US\$2 billion solar energy investment is still not in. FQM's US\$1.2 billion Kansanshi investment pledge is being awaited. And when it comes in it will be spent elsewhere to buy mining equipment and other supplies.

Dr M'membe said the impact of electricity load shedding on the Kwacha should also not be ignored.

“If Dr Musokotwane were right, then what would happen to the Kwacha if this debt restructuring totally failed? What other options are there for Zambia under Mr Hichilema's UPND government rule?”

Time is not on the side of Hichilema and the UPND

2026 'looms as if it were tomorrow' as people lose confidence



Reading our way to the revolution

READING is very important to the revolution and revolutionaries, Socialist Party General Secretary and First Vice-President Cosmas Musheke Musumali (pictured) said as he donated 20 books to a new SP resource centre.

“Congratulations to our very own Pan-Africanism Today Chairperson and member of the Socialist Party Youth League Comrade Nancy Busiku Mpongo for successfully launching a resource centre at the SP Secretariat,” he said.

Dr Musumali said the centre would afford Socialist Party members an opportunity to read revolutionary books, and he encouraged party members to support it.

He congratulated Comrade Mpongo for coming up with the “brilliant idea”.

“Let's read to understand and push the struggle,” he said.

#promote reading donate a book

Call for action as Malaria cases soar

MALARIA cases are on a frightening rise in North Western, Luapula, Northern and Muchinga provinces, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

“We are fast approaching a crisis point. Urgent action is needed,” he said in a Facebook post.

“While recognised internationally for our ambitious goal of malaria elimination and for having attained pre-elimination levels in Southern Province, Zambia as a whole remains a highly endemic malaria country, with the entire population considered to be at risk of contracting the disease.

“It is among the 20 countries with the highest malaria incidence and mortality globally, and the country carries two percent of the global malaria case burden and 6.1 percent of the case burden in East and Southern Africa,” he said. “Risk is highest in the wetter, rural, impoverished provinces of Luapula, Northern, Muchinga and North Western (11-30 percent prevalence), and lowest in Lusaka Province (0.1 percent) and in Southern Province (<0.1 per cent).

“We urge the government to urgently do something before many more lives are lost.”

TIME IS not on the side of President Hakiende Hichilema and the UPND with the Zambian people quickly losing confidence in them over a range of issues, including their election lies, Brill Aggephrey, Socialist Party Southern Province secretary, says.

“Mr Hichilema is haunted by time, and 2026 is looming as if it were tomorrow. He is trying by hook and by crook to turn his lies in the 2021 election campaign into reality, but it just isn't working out as he thought it would,” Aggephrey said in a Facebook post.

“This isn't surprising because, as comrade Fred M'membe said, “Lies have very short legs”, and Mr Hichilema's lies are taking him nowhere except into shame and confusion.”

Aggephrey said this had resulted in UPND being divided into two groups, with neither particularly attractive to most Zambians

Miracle

“The first group thinks that maybe one day the President will turn out to be a hero and will perform a miracle. This is a fake hope because the old capitalistic economics that Mr Hichilema and Finance Minister Situmbeko Musokotwane practise can no longer spin our economy. They will sell out Zambians to the USA and other Western countries. The President only sees hope in white-skinned people.

“The other half has lost all hope in Mr Hichilema and UPND. Like other Zambians, Southern Province, which once wholeheartedly believed in him as a saviour, now sees him as a stingy Patel-like man from among us. It's a sorry situation for Southern Province and Zambia.

“The worst thing about our economy is that presently, Mr Hichilema and his Minister of Finance practise patriarchal policies and economics. They don't particularly care about women or the young.

“Following Women's Day celebrations, it is clear that UPND can't identify the real cause of gender-based violence. They think it can

be solved by addressing gender equality in technology. They fail to answer the question, “Why do we have gender-based violence in the world?” The answer is because of patriarchy, which is the heart and soul of capitalism.

“Gender-based violence can only be dealt with if the world uproots and destroys patriarchy. But UPND is patriarchy itself. Patriarchy is an evil prejudice that makes those who practise it believe they are better than common or less-educated people. They think they are better than their female colleagues or the young, and manipulate them by placing themselves as top dogs in the decision-making process for profit and gain.

“Look how illogical Mr Hichilema and Mr Musokotwane are in terms of economics. They tax village girls and other females every month on sanitary pads, making them very expensive. How uncaring Mr Hichilema, Mr Musokotwane and the UPND are.

“The Speaker of the Parliament is female, top judges are female, we have female ministers and MPs, and they all know what I am talking about when it comes to exploitation over sanitary pads. I highlight this as one example but there are many more.

“NGOs are also playing to the gallery, failing to speak out on sanitary pads. NGOCC YWCA is nowhere to be seen or heard as if it didn't see this as a crisis. NGOs claim to represent people, women in particular. They are led by people with degrees and yet they are the most undemocratic, unelected institutions. Mostly they serve the interests of their funder-raisers rather than the Zambian people.

“Yes, Madam Mutinta Hichilema did donate sanitary pads to Chaba School in Livingstone. I thought this would be done throughout Zambia and perpetually, but alas, this was just a public relations show, and not from the heart of a mother.

“Such economic/medical/sanitary dilemmas – and numerous others not referred to here – are quickly evaporating the little time that is remaining for Mr Hichilema and his team.”

As Castro said: We must struggle to win the world we want

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cannot be democratic, a people who cannot decide for themselves cannot be democratic. A colony and neo-colony cannot be democratic.

That's why today, at the United Nations, membership is on the basis of sovereignty. Only sovereign nations can be members of the United Nations, because only sovereign nations can decide for themselves. A colony cannot be a member of the United Nations. It's not by accident. It's not a mistake. If you have no respect for the dignity of others, if you have no respect for the sovereignty of other countries, you cannot claim to be a champion of democracy.

They used to say all roads lead to Rome. Today we can confidently say, all roads to progress, all roads to what is better for humanity, lead to Beijing. This is a people who have developed themselves, a country that has developed itself without colonising any country in the world, without plundering any country in the world, without subjugating any people in the world. This is a country that is developing with maximum respect for others, for its history, for its cultures, and recognises the diversity that is civilisation. We were only taught one form of civilisation, one form of modernisation; that was the Western way. Westernness was a measure of how civilised, how modern you are. We

US rhetoric should be dismissed with derision

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“We have been cheated, fooled, for a long time with rhetoric about democracy and freedom. It must come to an end. The American rhetoric about democracy should be dismissed with derision.

“Let them leave us alone and focus on ending the conflict they provoked and are fuelling in Ukraine.

“And clearly, whatever they say, whatever they do, Ukraine is heading for military defeat and will never be the same. The contortions that will be needed to explain Ukraine's impending defeat will be something to behold. If anything, this conflict has actually helped to bring Russia much closer to China. It has also helped expose the hypocrisy of the United States and the West.

“Cynical and confected outrage in the West about Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty conveniently ignores its own, more devastating crimes in Vietnam, Grenada, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. There is no mention of the West's acceptance of Turkey's annexation of northern Cyprus and support for Israel's effective annexation of the West Bank and the Golan Heights, as well as its brutal blockade of Gaza. The West is not defending any moral or legal principles in Ukraine. Rather, it is opportunistically exploiting a tragic situation, which it helped to provoke for its own interests.

“But events do not take place in a timeless vacuum. Historical context is always needed to make sense of them.

“Anyone who understands how the United States moved NATO relentlessly eastward towards the Russian border after the collapse of the USSR, despite assurances to the contrary, will not be surprised that Russia responded,” Dr M'membe said.

reject that. We reject it because it's not correct. We reject it because it's undemocratic. We reject it because it's uncivilised to think of other people and the world in that way.

Today, they cannot accept that China has caught up with them, China is about to surpass them in many areas of human endeavour. Their imperialist arrogance is inhibiting them from accepting that reality, their racist arrogance is inhibiting them from accepting that reality. But the world is changing. The Chinese we are witnessing today, as President Xi said in Moscow the other day, have not been seen in 100 years.

They (the Americans) have shaped a world that they themselves are scared of, and they have shaped a world that is not sustainable.

Democracy, human development is not sustainable on the basis of plunder, on the basis of enslavement, on the basis of humiliating other people every day. That is a system we are seeing today, a system that will not survive if plunder is eliminated, if subjugation of other peoples, other nations, is eliminated, if inequality in the world is eliminated. That system will disappear.

The only system that can survive and can endure for long is a system that is based on mutual benefit, win-win relationships, mutual respect for others, accommodation and tolerance of others, and fraternal love for all humanity. This is what we find in China today. This is what China's example is showing us.

Indeed, all pathways are different. There is no path that is the same. Even if we are leading to the same destination, each path has its own characteristics. We are seeing that, we are learning that, we are experiencing that today with China.

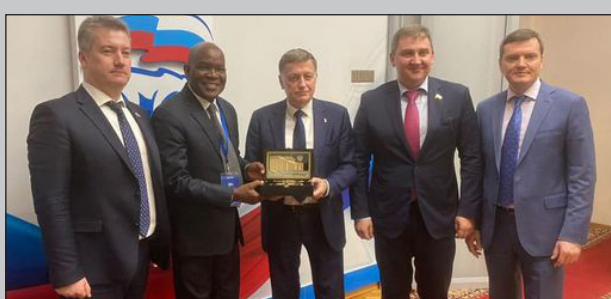
There are many things that have to be done to get the world that we want. A more just, a more fair, a more peaceful world is possible. But it won't drop from the skies, we have to struggle for it. And, as Fidel (Castro) said, if we struggle we will win.



Dr M'membe with Leonid Eduardovich Slutsky, deputy of the State Duma of Russia (above), Gennadii Ziuganov, Communist Party leader (below), and members of the Russian State Duma (below right)



Dr M'membe with Makarov Vyacheslav Serafimovich, First Deputy Head of Russia's ruling United Russia Party (above), and Deputy Head of the Russian Socialist Party Chepa Alexey Vasilievich (below left)



We can't solve problems alone, we need more cooperation with Russia

Arrest warrant for Putin 'mischievous, without legal basis, cheap politics'

Socialist staff reporter

THE PEOPLE who are supposed to have been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) are President Bush, Tony Blair and others, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe said on RT television in Moscow.

"They (Western powers) killed Muammar Gaddafi, many Libyans with no good reason. They have killed children in Syria, killed so many people in Iraq, in Afghanistan. They have killed our leaders. They killed Patrice Lumumba. They have killed so many Africans, so many people in the world, and none of them have been indicted by the ICC."

Dr M'membe, who was in Moscow to attend the Russia-Africa Parliamentary Conference, was responding to a question from RT interviewer Peter Scott about the international arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin.

"I think it is mischievous. It's malicious. It has no legal basis. It's all politics – and very cheap politics," he replied.

Scott said the timing of the move against Putin was interesting, coinciding with a visit by China President Xi Jinping to Moscow and the 20th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq.

"They (the US and its allies) don't want the war to end. They are benefiting from this war. It is their proxy war," Dr M'membe said.

"President Jinping's trip here is the start of an effort to end this conflict. There is a need to end

this conflict. It is unnecessary. It is a conflict they started, they are fuelling. It is a conflict they want to sustain for their own benefit, not even for the benefit of the Ukrainian people," he said.

"The Ukrainian people want to live in peace. They need peace, but the peace of the Ukrainian people cannot be guaranteed without also guaranteeing the security of the Russian people. Security for Russia is necessary, just as there is a need for security for Europe, security for America. Every nation on this planet should feel secure if we are to achieve peace in the world."

Dr M'membe said there would not be a Ukraine war if the US and its allies had listened to Russia's concerns.

"From 2008 through to 2014, if the Americans and their partners had been listening, if they'd been wanting peace, there would be no conflict in Ukraine."

Escalation

"This is their conflict, they wanted it. They have sustained it. President Putin means well. President Jinping means well. They would like to see this conflict end. But it can't end if the security concerns of Russia are not guaranteed."

"Russia didn't just walk into Ukraine. They had been pleading since 2008 to have a peaceful region. You can't be pushing NATO through into Moscow."

Scott said it was ironic that Finland's NATO membership was about to be ratified. "It is part of the escalation of the conflict, part of making Russia insecure," Dr M'membe said. The USA would

not accept Russia or China having military facilities in Canada, in Mexico. They would not accept that. They never accepted the missiles placed in Cuba in 1962. You saw what crisis arose out of that.

"But today, they are setting up bases everywhere in the world, including in my own country, Zambia. They are setting up what they call a military office, but we know it is a military facility. What has Zambia to do with the USA's security?"

Scott asked if Dr M'membe thought Russia, the US and China were vying for influence in Africa, noting that there had been a number of high-profile visits from the US "as high as (Secretary of State) Anthony Blinken".

"Russia and China have been dealing with Africa for a long time," Dr M'membe replied. "They have been on the side of Africa in Africa's liberation struggles. They have been on the side of Africa in Africa's effort to build its nations. They have been with us. The Americans have been on the side of those who oppressed Africa, those who brutalised Africa, those who oppressed Africa, those who dehumanised Africans. They supported the apartheid regime in South Africa. It's not a secret. They even participated in the arrest of Mr Mandela and sending him to prison for 27 years."

He said the US had supported the racist, minority regime in Rhodesia, the bombing of facilities in Zambia, the colonial authorities in Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, participated in the killing African leaders, national liberation heroes.

The US and its allies don't want the war to end. They are benefiting from this war. It is their proxy war . . . there is a need to end this conflict. It is unnecessary. It is a conflict they started, they are fuelling. It is a conflict they want to sustain for their own benefit, it is not even for the benefit of the Ukrainian people

"What can they tell us today? What do they want? How many people has Russia killed in Africa, even under the Soviet Union? How many Africans have the Chinese killed in Africa? Who has led coups in Africa? Has Russia carried out any military coup in Africa? Has China carried out any military coup in Africa?"

Scott said there were Western critics who accused China of luring African countries into a debt trap by providing large loans with easy conditions and without strict enough ways of paying them back. Dr M'membe disagreed with them.

"Let's look at those countries that are said to be highly indebted," he replied. "Let's take Zambia. Only 30 percent of Zambia's debt belongs to China and Chinese enterprises, 70 percent of it belongs to Western companies

and institutions. Only about ten percent of Ghana's foreign debt is with China, if not less. The great majority of it – 80 to 90 percent – belongs with Western institutions. So who is causing a debt trap for Africa, for African countries?"

"If you go to Zambia today, you can see clearly where the debt with the Chinese lies. You'll see the rail, you'll see hospitals, you'll see schools, you'll see hydropower stations, you'll see agriculture dams, and so on. And we're not even talking about the free things that have been done. The second biggest hospital in the country is a gift from China. The biggest conference hall, built in Lusaka, is a gift from China. The biggest soccer stadium in Zambia today, the Heroes' Stadium, is a gift from China. The Chinese don't talk about these things."

Tangible

"You'll not find a hospital, a big hospital, built by Americans or the British. You'll not find a big road built by them. You'll not find anything of value that is tangible. You'll not find an airport."

"When Kamala Harris lands in Lusaka, she will be landing at an airport built by the Chinese. She'll be travelling to a hotel on a road built by the Chinese," he said.

Scott asked if the Ukraine war had affected relations between Russia and Africa.

"Russia has never advertised its relations with Africa. Even the support for the African peoples' national liberation struggles was not for publicity, was not for politics," Dr M'membe said.

Russia had no companies operating in Africa at that time when they were supporting our national liberation; not a single mine, not a single business was owned by Russia on African soil.

"You can say the same about China. But can we say the same about the United States? Can we say the same about Britain and other European countries – France? They have exploited us for centuries. Russia even refused to take part in the scramble for Africa. The Czar had a representative at the 1884 Berlin Conference at which Africa was carved into bantustans. But Russia never took a territory in 1884-1885."

And finally, Scott asked Dr M'membe how he saw relations between the countries developing.

"We need more cooperation with Russia. After the national liberation Russia pulled back, but the support continued," he said.

"We have so many African students studying in Russia today, a continuation from the 60s. We have a university here in Moscow that was built in solidarity with African peoples in honour of Patrice Lumumba. Can you find that anywhere in the West? The support for Africa continued, but the problem is Russia did not go into economic cooperation with Africa in terms of investments and so forth. You won't find many Russian enterprises in Africa."

"We want that to change. No country on this planet can solve all its problems by itself. We all need each other. Even the richest country, the United States, needs the cooperation of others. We need cooperation with Russia," Dr M'membe said.

Socialist Party President Fred M'membe: Zambia needs honesty, energy and patriotism, not miracles



What it is like to be under the control of a narcissist

WHEN a person who has an excessive interest in or admiration of themselves, a person who thinks the world revolves around them, takes over control of your destiny things can never be OK.

The things a narcissist cares about are very self-serving and superficial. But they are a true reflection of their narcissistic insecurity and the emptiness they have inside.

The first thing that means the world to the narcissist is their image. Everything has to be in line with the image they are trying to push. Narcissists invest time, money, and energy to get people to think highly of them. Everything they do is to improve their reputation and status.

The second thing that means the world to the narcissist is their narcissistic supply, which usually comes as a result of that fake image they have created. They need attention, compliments, and praise to feel good about themselves. They need to know that they are loved by the masses and held in high esteem.

And in order to get this, they have to deceive people. With narcissists, people are just a means to an end, and that is why they are not able to truly love or care for anyone. Because all they want from us is their narcissistic supply. It makes them feel powerful and in control.

The third thing the narcissist cares about is money and power. Money helps them to boost their fake image. So, they are driven to be successful so that they can have more. They have also realised that with more money, they can have control over more people. And with money, as with everything else, the narcissist cannot have enough and is never satisfied with what they have. With more money comes more power, and narcissists take pleasure in controlling the lives of people and being feared.

And finally, money and power are tools to help them gain even more control, maintain their image and provide further narcissistic supply.

And because of this, truth hurts a narcissist forever. You have to understand who you're dealing with. Narcissists are severely disordered individuals who don't have the same thought processes as you, and don't allow themselves to feel! Why? Solely to avoid all feelings such as hurt, pain, shame, guilt, remorse, humiliation, rejection and abandonment.

Bottom line – you can't hurt someone who doesn't care. The narc only cares about the narc. Period! The narc doesn't care about another living soul. Sure, they pretend to care, but only to get what they want from you. It's all part of their manipulative game. Everything the narc does is to promote their own self-serving agenda; feeding their ego, maintaining their façade, and portraying their superiority.

But you need to think like the narc to get to the narc. They're only concerned with taking advantage, reaping their benefits and using you for their own personal gain. There was never any real bond, connection or attachment on the narc's part. You simply served a need, like an ordinary kitchen appliance. At least, that's about as valuable as you are to the narc.

So what does the narc care about? Their ego! You're not going hurt the narc in any way, shape, or form that might hurt you, as in, with emotions. Take all emotions out of the equation. Think and reason logically, not emotionally. Everything you thought you knew was a lie. It was all a means of manipulation so the narc could keep doing what they were doing. Accept the fact that you were played, you were used, you were lied to, manipulated.

The only way to rip the rug right out from under the narc's feet is by letting go, walking away, and never looking back. Anything other than ignoring the narc indefinitely will all be used against you and end up hurting you worse than the narc.

If you want to flip the script and give the narc a taste of their own medicine, do to them exactly what they did to you – sop caring. So if you truly want to hurt the narc, the only way you can bruise their fragile, little ego is by acting like they never even existed. Let's be honest, no one quite enjoys being ignored. But most 'normal', healthy, mature

adults get over it. For a narcissist though, it is the ultimate sting of betrayal and rejection. Being ignored goes against everything they stand for – themselves! You will be the one leaving the narc feeling confused and invalidated when you show them they no longer matter.

When you walk away and ignore the narc forever, you're letting them know they're just not worth it to you anymore; they're not worth your time, your energy, your attention or an emotion. You let the narc know just how irrelevant they really are in your world and this drives them insane. They need to know they're still special and important, that they can still use you at their convenience, on their terms. They need to prove to the flying monkeys every lie they've spread about you being so 'obsessed' with them! They need to prove they're better than you.

But by refusing to engage, interact, and associate with the narc, it's game over! The narc gains absolutely nothing. And the truth reveals itself in due time. Pay the narc no mind, they are no longer any of your concern. Delete them out of existence entirely. And take back your control. The narc truly believes they have all control over you and your emotions. Prove them wrong. You hold the power, and never give it back to the narc.

The cost of journalism

RECENTLY I read an interesting piece from my friend Dickson Jere about the media and the story of High Court judge Muma.

In a polite, sympathetic, and restrained manner, Dickson bemoaned how the media had failed to get to the bottom of this story.

With great compassion, Dickson, a former journalist of great experience and now a legal practitioner, concluded that newsgathering costs money. Indeed, newsgathering – especially investigative journalism – doesn't come cheap.

If something is not urgently done by society to save journalism, gossip will become the order of the day.

News media outlets have lost most of their advertising income, copy sales and subscriptions. It is extremely difficult to profitably run a news media outlet.

Social media gossip is not a substitute for good, professional journalism work. Let's not allow professional journalism to die. We need it and society has to invest in it.

The *Post* used to run a three-month practical course in newsgathering, news writing, interviewing skills, news editing and photojournalism every year. I wonder if there is a newsroom doing that today.

The government needs to give a lot of incentives – fiscal and otherwise – to news media if we are to see a reversal of fortunes.

We'll fight for our future

OUR nation's future, the solutions to its problems, cannot continue to depend on the selfish interests of a few people with money, nor on the cold calculations of profits that a few businessmen draw up.

The country cannot continue begging on its knees for miracles from a few golden calves, like the Biblical one destroyed by the prophet's fury. Golden calves cannot perform miracles of any kind. Our country cannot continue begging for IMF deals; these deals have never worked for us.

The problems of our country can be solved only if we dedicate ourselves to fight for it with the same energy, honesty, and patriotism our freedom fighters had when they founded it. The trickle-down economic policies coming out of the mouths of our opponents will simply preserve the status quo and will not solve these problems. In this present-day world, social problems are not solved by spontaneous generation.

The Socialist Party government backed by the people and with the respect of the nation, after cleansing the different institutions of corrupt practices, will proceed immediately to the country's industrialisation, mobilising all inactive capital and submitting this mammoth task to experts and men and women of absolute competence, totally removed from all political machines, for study, direction, planning and realisation.



Ndloa-Lusaka dual carriageway will cost US\$577 million to be recovered over 25 years

Govt is taking a capitalist route on the highway

Ndola-Lusaka road contract 'betrayal'

Socialist staff reporter

THE SOCIALIST Party says it is not against the Ndola-Lusaka carriageway project but is critical of the way the government is handling it.

Speaking at a press briefing in Kitwe, Socialist Party Spokesperson Frank Bwalya asked why a company with no resources would be given such a contract.

He said the 25 years in which the contracted company was expected to collect the toll fees was too long.

"We wonder why a company with literally nothing would come to Zambia, say they will build a road for us, will use our money, and after building the road for us after using our money, are going to own that road, collect toll fees. In other words, pay themselves for 25 years. There is a component of maintenance in that 25 years, but that road will not be what it would have been 25 years before," he said.

"We wonder why this government has decided to take that route. As you all know by now, it is going to borrow over 80 percent of the money that is required, from our money. And when we say from our money we are not strictly talking about taxpayers' money, we are talking about money that belongs to Zambian workers, held by NAPSA as a compensation fund and so on."

Bwalya warned Zambians that this was how capitalists operated.

"They come with nothing, they register a company, they use your money, money for all the workers, money that you sweated for, you suffered for, that is the money that they want to use.

"At the end of the day, after using that money in that manner, they are the ones who are going to go away smiling and laughing. They are the ones who are going to make a lot of money in terms of profits, and they are not doing that for themselves, they are doing that for their children," he said.

"So 25 years after that road is done, the person, the young man who is going to be born on that day when the road is commissioned, by the time this company stops collecting the toll fees, collecting the money, that person, ndishi umutoto walipona, alisunka, aliamfula kale, alyenda, alipwisha na grade seven na grade nine, Aliya naku university, alingila nenchito, abombako limbi na three years. We thought that we should put it that way so some who might think this 25

years is a short period, can realise."

Bwalya reminded people that President Hakainde Hichilema was against middlemen when he was in opposition, but said there were now middlemen in this project.

"When that road is given back to us, depending on when the project will start, I think I will be 85. Zambia will require perhaps 10, 20 or even 50 times more than the money that will be spent to build the road to rehabilitate it, or build it afresh," he said.

"Hakainde Hichilema is a businessman and what they are going to do is capitalist. Although they are saying they are being methodical, it's all about betraying our people. We are not against the project. We are against the manner in which the New Dawn has decided to build this road."

Project will take its toll

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M'membe says the Ndola-Lusaka dual carriageway will cost US\$577 million to be recovered over a 25-year concession, translating into a monthly recovery rate of US\$24 million per year or US\$2 million per month.

"This is minus interest for which the cost of funds needs to be capitalised over the project life span of 25 years. Also, maintenance costs need to be factored in the funding model," he said.

"Before we joyfully celebrate this project, we have to ask what the weighted average cost of a trip between Lusaka and Ndola and vice versa will be for each vehicle. To derive positive cash flow and payback to the investor, the financial models used will have weighted average costs per vehicle per trip.

"Can the government kindly avail these details to the public to prepare us for how much the toll cost will be per trip. This is critical information, which for transparency and planning purposes, we need to know in order to make informed decisions.

"The South African experience of the Gauteng Overhead Toll Plazas is that the project has failed and customers have refused to pay due to lack of a consultative process, leading to the South African treasury taking over the financial obligations to the operator using government revenues generated from other sources as opposed to toll fees anticipated at the project inception stage.

"The whole project is now a white elephant. It begs a question in the Zambian context: will the toll fees for this project be affordable to road users and will customers stomach the costs to avoid the South African experience? We have a debt issue we are currently dealing with and by asking forward-looking questions we want to avoid a repeat of the same."

It's time we followed our own path

IT'S TIME to move away from Western economic hegemony and dictatorship and see things for ourselves, analyse things for ourselves, and come to our own conclusions, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"We have been swallowing their recipes without chewing and blindly following their prescriptions. It's time to take our own paths – and every path is different," he wrote in a Facebook post.

"For example, take inflation targeting used blindly by the Bank of Zambia through interest rate hikes. It does not work for our country because very few Zambian companies/SMEs and individuals have access to credit, which is used as a transmission mechanism for interest rate hikes in the hope that it subdues expendi-

ture consequently bringing down inflation. But this cannot work in Zambia because very few people have credit and therefore are not directly impacted by rate hikes.

"By contrast in the Western world and a few African countries like South Africa, literally everyone has a credit facility, be it contract phone, domestic equipment/furniture hire purchase, credit card, home and motor vehicle finance, and so on.

"Those who disagree with what we are saying, let them explain to us how this works in Zambia.

"We know this is what the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund recommend. But is it working? Is it the right way to go?"

US democracy weapon

Socialist Party President **Fred M'membe** was interviewed by **Xu Qinduo** of China Global Television Network while he was in Beijing to give a speech at the opening ceremony of The Second International Forum on Democracy – The Shared Human Values. TV topics ranged from the nature of democracy, the political arrogance of the USA and its interference in the affairs of other countries, human rights, to harmony and unity in diversity

CHINA Global Television Network (CGTN) presenter Xu Qinduo started off the Dialogue programme interview by asking Dr M'membe whether he thought democracy was an end in itself or the means to end.

FM: It can never be an end. It's a means to something much more important for human beings. It's much more the means to the happiness of the human being, to the welfare of the human being, to all those things that constitute the dignified life of the human being. Access to food, access to housing, access to clean water, access to health services, access to education, national sovereignty, national honour, all those things constitute democracy. And also in some way they matter to human rights.

XQ: With good governance that delivers, people do have access to and enjoy stability, prosperity and the opportunity to develop themselves. So probably, there are different forms of democracy. Good governance delivers and poor governance fails to deliver.

FM: What is good governance? Good governance is the ability of people to participate in the governance of their communities, their societies, their nations, and indeed, in the governance of the world in which they live to ensure that their interests are taken care of, to ensure that their dignity is always under consideration. Those are the things that really, really matter to human beings.

XQ: Can we say that if there is good governance then there is, say, the participation of the people, or a reflection of the will of the people and then, if it delivers, that is why we call it good governance. If we judge people by that standard then we can say there are countries that are well governed, like Singapore, or if you look at the track record of China over the past 45 years, the strong economic growth and improvement in people's living standards show that the Chinese system – whatever you call it – delivers.

FM: The Chinese system does deliver, does respect human dignity. To govern and lead a people of 1.4 billion human beings is not an easy thing. And especially in a country that started off very poor, as one of the poorest countries. It's not easy to



Left: CGTN presenter Xu Qinduo interviewing Socialist Party [Zambia] President Fred M'membe; Centre: China President Xi Jinping against a photo montage illustrating how after

bring it to where it is today. If you had no respect for human beings then human beings would not care right back.

You can't oppress 1.4 billion human beings and they just keep quiet and tolerate and they just watch you. Even if you are so powerful, you are so hard working, how can you take care of 1.4 billion human beings without their participation? So it shows you how strong the governance system, how appropriate the governance system, is that has been employed in China.

And also, good governance is not only caring about the human beings in your territory, it's also caring about human beings outside your territory. How do you treat other people? How do you live with other countries, other nations? What is your attitude towards others? What you do inside your house matters also in terms of what you do outside your house. If you don't clean your house all the time but you are destroying the environment, are you a good person? For how long are you going to live in that house, secure?

China has demonstrated the ability to live well within its territories and to live well outside of its territories, to respect people within its territory and to respect people outside its territory. You cannot claim to be democratic, you cannot claim to care about human rights when you enslave others, when you brutalise others, when every day you are insulting and mocking others. You have no respect for others, other than yourself, you exploit others, you plunder other nations, you dictate to others what they should do in their homes. You can't be a good person, even inside your own house.

So China has demonstrated not only being good to its own citizens but also to the global citizens. China has cared more about the global environment than any other country. Despite heavy industrialisation it has done more to protect the environment than any other country. This is a country that has developed without having colonies, without enslaving anybody, without plundering anybody. This is a country that has developed a mutual respect

for others, win-win cooperation with others. What more can you ask of a people who are pushing so hard?

XQ: If you look at coverage of China in the Western press, or remarks by Western officials, in particular US officials, they often refer to China as the biggest challenge, the biggest threat to the US. How do you understand that allegation, criticism?

FM: You can understand why they are worried about a country like China, because China is working in the opposite direction to them. China is working to free other people and free itself from being plundered, from being humiliated. The USA is a country that has thrived, survived, prospered from the slave trade. They enslaved Africans for centuries, they plundered the resources of Latin America, Africa, Asia. They even plundered the resources of Europe.

If plunder and the exploitation of other people is removed, the USA will not be the powerful country that it is today. If there is equality in dealings with each other, the USA ceases because it doesn't know how to deal with other people, other nations, on an equal basis. It gets lost. It's worried today about the multipolar world that is emerging because its hegemony and interests are being threatened. It's not China per se, it's the interests of the Americans that are being threatened with a world that is more equal, more fair, more just. They can't survive in that world because their methods of existence are based on plundering other nations, exploiting and humiliating others.

XQ: A related question. I would cite Chinese efforts to broker a peace deal for Saudi Arabia and Iran to resume their diplomatic ties, and then you see the Chinese efforts for some conditions for peace or a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, but then if you look at the reaction or response from the US side, they try to dismiss the Chinese efforts, or belittle the Chinese efforts. Why is there that kind of response? The Chinese efforts basically have been welcomed by the

rest of the world, and people see that as very positive; more peace, more stability in the Middle East. What's wrong with that?

FM: A world that is peaceful is not suitable for the United States because it prospers from conflict. It sets one humble nation against the other. It does not help to remove conflicts. It always creates conflict. When you look at the conflicts that have existed in the world since 1776 when the US was formed, the USA usually has had a hand in them. When it doesn't have a hand in them, it doesn't work to resolve the conflicts, it works to perpetuate those conflicts. It thrives on conflict, it benefits from them. When the world is divided it becomes easier to exploit, it becomes easier to plunder. A united people cannot be plundered, cannot be exploited, cannot be made to fight each other and prosper. This is a country that benefits from wars. It prospers from wars. It creates wars as a business, to make profits from them.

XQ: A famous example is the military industrial complex in the US. It welcomes conflicts and wars so it can sell weapons, ammunition, and make a profit out of that.

FM: Yes, and they are also linked to the media, they are linked to the politics, the responses of the politicians, so they have to find conflict all the time. If no conflict arises naturally, they create it so that their industries make more and more money.

XQ: And every year the US publishes a human rights record on every country but itself. You know, some people accuse the US of using so-called human rights to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, in particular the countries they are not happy with or they see as rivals. What do you make of that?

FM: The pious arm of human rights that the US waves all the time is hypocritical. This is a country that has invaded other countries, killing so many people, including



Just three of the African leaders who were assassinated by imperialist powers or forces working with them: I

Used to divide countries



four decades of policy implementations and effective governance, China declared itself successful in lifting 770 million citizens out of poverty; Right: Fred M'membe on CGTN



their territory. Can the USA really claim Guantanamo to be their territory? You can understand the same behaviour in Taiwan. If today, China or Russia went and did the same in Hawaii – what the USA's doing with Taiwan – would the USA accept it? They say, “do unto others as you would like them to do unto you”. Does the USA do unto others as it would like them to do?

XQ: This is an interesting perspective, the point you make about equality among sovereign nations as an exercise of democracy based on equal footing and expressing one's wishes, needs or demands equally in the international community. Do you think there is enough democracy in terms of that respect?

FM: Territories are occupied by human beings. How can you respect human beings if you don't respect the territories they occupy? How can you respect human beings when you don't respect the privacy of their homes, the dignity of their

homes? A homeland is something very important to human beings. Every human being on this planet has a homeland. Their homeland is their house, their home, that's why it's called homeland. You don't just get into someone's house. You don't just get into someone's country and interfere. If you don't respect the sovereignty of a territory, you cannot respect the human beings who live in that territory. You cannot claim to be committed to their democratic rights, you cannot claim to be committed to their human rights. What are human rights without a homeland? What are human rights or democracy without sovereignty, when your rights can be trampled on, when your leaders can be toppled anytime, when your leaders can be killed anytime? Look at what they did to Saddam Hussein, look what they did to Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. Look at what they do to other people's leaders. Look even at the attitude,

the arrogance towards other people. They never respect the leaders of other countries.

XQ: Interesting point you make about respect for sovereignty. Part of the justification for the US invasion of Iraq was to plant the seed of democracy in the Middle East – in addition to the (issue of the) non-existent so-called weapons of mass destruction. Is there fully-fledged democracy in Iraq now?

FM: They have had 20 years. Iraq today is ungovernable. It's a failed state. Since the murder of Muammar Gaddafi, is Libya today more democratic since 2011? Is Libya today more organised? Is Libya today more stable? It's a failed state. Wherever they have been there are problems. Have they brought peace and stability and democracy and respect for human rights to Syria? Without the intervention of the Russians, where would Syria be today? How many countries have the USA toppled? How many coup

d'états have they carried out? How many assassinations of leaders of other countries have they carried out? How many citizens of other countries have they killed? How many citizens of other countries have they arrested and detained without charges?

XQ: In addition to the lack of respect for sovereignty, what about the human rights record inside the USA?

FM: Look at their treatment of black people.

XQ: George Floyd?

FM: Yes. And when did black people start voting in America? They became independent in 1776. When were black people, who were taken there against their will, given the right to vote? It's not very long ago. Can you claim equal rights for black people in America? Go to American jails today, the majority of the inmates are black people in a country where the blacks are in a minority – but in prison they are the majority. Why? Are black people generally bad people? Is there something that can be done about that?

XQ: It's more than a human rights issue. It's racism.

FM: Yes. How come the hatred for China? It's racism. They cannot accept that a country that is non-white can surpass them economically and in so many areas of human achievement, human endeavour. They can't accept that. But it is happening. It is unstoppable.

XQ: Human rights are controversial sometimes when it comes to the definition. For example, some countries would stress fundamental rights; access to clean water, health, decent living standards. Others, mostly Western nations, stress political rights, the right to cast a ballot or voting in a procedure or practice of democracy. What's your view?

FM: When people go to vote, who do they vote for? Do they vote for themselves? Do they vote for other people? When it comes to other rights, like access to clean water, access to food, who do they feed? Do they feed themselves? Do they

put water in their own mouths or other persons' mouths? They care about voting because those poor people do not vote for themselves, they vote for them. They don't seek a political agenda for themselves, they follow an agenda set for them. When it comes to the things that really matter; food, water, and other things, it's about those individuals. When a black person votes in America, who is he voting for? When a black person is eating in America, who is he eating for? In whose mouth does he put food? He's not putting food in Biden's mouth, but when it comes to votes, he is voting for Biden. So the vote matters because it is going to Biden. The food doesn't matter because it is going into that poor black person's mouth.

XQ: Obviously there are differences in terms of democracy. If you look at, for example, the United States in 2021, they hosted the first democracy summit, and some people say they use democracy as a tool, if not a weapon, to divide the world, to advance their geostrategy, to contain the rights of China, and to divide the world into democracy versus autocracy, labelling countries as autocratic or authoritarian instead of having democratic rights. What do you make of that?

FM: They don't hide their ambition. They say it very clearly, you're either with us or not with us. What does it mean to be with them? To be with them means to do their will; to live according to their dictates. When they say jump, you jump. If you don't then you are not with them. These summits are there to divide the world between those who they call dictatorships, who are not with them, and those who they call democracies, who are with them. If you are with them you are not a dictator, even if you are one. We have seen this in Africa. We had Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. For how long did they sustain him? Mobutu had no elections, Mobutu squandered the resources of his country, he was still their man. It didn't matter. They had their puppet regime in South Africa; they

were their friends. Were their puppets in South Africa democratic? They had the white minority racist regime in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. They were their friends, they supported them. Was that a democratic regime? Was there a democratic dispensation in Rhodesia? They supported Pinochet in Chile, who toppled an elected government with their assistance. He was waiting for them. Did they care that Pinochet killed so many people? Did they try Pinochet for violation of human rights, for mass murders? What did they do in Indonesia with Suharto? How many communists were killed? Almost two million communists were killed in Indonesia. Have the Americans raised the banner of human rights? Has anybody been arrested for genocide? No. How many people did they kill in Vietnam? How many? Has anyone been tried for the murders in Vietnam?

XQ: Or the bombing of the Nord Stream pipeline?

FM: Yes. What is worse terrorism than that? Keeping the old and children in Europe dying of cold. They do that.

XQ: Recently the Chinese proposed a Global Civilisation Initiative calling for cooperation and coordination among different civilisations, while stressing the fact that there are a variety of civilisations around the world. What do you make of that?

FM: The concept itself, Global Civilisation Initiative, shows they care, their respect for other people. Yes, we are on the same planet, but we have been living in different enviro-spots of this planet for centuries and we are at different stages of our own development. A superiority complex leads to many problems. When you want to make other people feel they are inferior to you, it's not a path to a peaceful world. So you can see the clarity of President Xi, of the CPC in terms of the future of this world. You cannot build a future world that is peaceful, that is fair, that is just, that is humane, without respect for others, and here we are talking about maximum respect for others.

XQ: Equality and respect.

FM: Yes. We are diverse. It is not by accident that we have so many languages, we have so many cultures, we have so many traditions on this planet. Even songs, we sing so many different songs. Even dances, we have so many different dances. Are they in conflict with each other? If you dance differently from the way I dance, are they in conflict? If you sing a different song from the one I sing . . .

XQ: That's natural.

FM: . . . doesn't that add to the beauty? They say, in the Garden of Eden there were so many different plants, so many different flowers, but they existed in harmony with each other. They added to the beauty. In nature's creation, things were ordered that way. Who are we not to accept diversity?

XQ: Harmony in diversity.

FM: Yes, unity in diversity. Even a song – that's why in a choir you don't have just one voice. You cannot create a symphony with one voice. You cannot create a melody with one voice. You need more voices to create a nice symphony, a nice melody.



Muammar Gaddafi, Libya; Patrice Lumumba, Democratic Republic of Congo; Thomas Sankara, Burkina Faso

China pledges to increase imports of food from Africa

Beijing announces new focus of relationship with continent

Jevans Nyabiage

CHINA is to import more food products such as avocados, cashews, sesame seeds and chilli peppers from Africa, as agriculture emerges as the new focus of Beijing's engagement with the continent.

In the first two months of this year, Shanghai ports handled more than 40,000 tonnes of African agricultural products worth more than US\$100 million, according to Shanghai Customs.

By March 3, a total of 1,845 tonnes of African sesame had been imported through Shanghai's Waigaoqiao Port – 4.3 times more than in the same period last year, official data showed.

Africa produces about 65 per cent of the world's sesame, and Chinese officials say African countries including Mali, Togo, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda account for 90 per cent of China's imports of the product.

"The Chinese love sesame and many other imports from Africa," ambassador to Somalia Fei Shengchao said.

"With greater peace and stability, I am sure Somali farmers will also have chances to export their cash crops to China and make lives better for themselves and the nation as a whole."

A growing number of African products are in high demand in China as part of Beijing's broader strategy to implement President Xi Jinping's promise to increase non-resource imports from Africa.

Tariffs

During the 2021 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Dakar, Senegal, Xi promised to open up "green lanes" for African agricultural products, speed up inspection and quarantine, and waive more tariffs so that imports could hit US\$300 billion by 2025.

The Chinese foreign ministry said last year that since the 2018 FOCAC summit in Beijing, China had given market access to 25 kinds of food and agricultural products from 14 African countries, including Kenya, South Africa, Benin and Egypt.

The ministry said China was the second-largest destination for African agricultural exports, behind the European Union, and Chinese imports from Africa rose 18.2 per cent year on year in 2021.

Following accusations that it promoted an unhealthy trade imbalance by mostly importing raw materials such as oil, cobalt and copper from Africa, China has said it is keen to import avocados, soybean, sesame seeds, chilli peppers, cashews and spices.

Kenya and Tanzania are now exporting avocados to China, and South Africa is selling more fruit to it.

Wu Peng, director general of the foreign ministry's African affairs department, said recently that Kenya would ship 20,000 tonnes of avocados to China this year, and the first batch had already arrived.

Kenya started exporting fresh



China faces increasing pressure to feed its 1.4 billion people and mounting external uncertainty, says Xi Jinping



Left: African products on display at a trade expo in China in 2021. Right: Boxes of avocados at the Sunripe factory in Limuru, Kenya



Zambia signs soya bean deal

ZAMBIA has signed two protocols with China on the sanitary and phytosanitary export of soya bean meal and stevia leaves. The protocols were signed by Chinese Ambassador to Zambia Du Xiaohui and Zambia's Minister of Agriculture Mtolo Phiri in the southern district of Chikankata.

The Chinese envoy said after signing the two protocols that China would strengthen its cooperation with Zambia in the agriculture sector.

Earlier in the day, he toured the Kafue Lower Gorge Power Station, a Chinese-built hydropower plant.

The project was a milestone in the relationship between the two countries.

The construction of the 750 megawatts power plant is nearing completion, with four of the five generators already commissioned, and the fifth scheduled to be ready by the end of this year.

Xinhua

sation and where China stands on that from now on."

She said more demand for African products was not necessarily a bad thing for Africa. China had been sending more agricultural experts to Africa to help improve crop production and Chinese investors had pumped money into farming.

Paul Frimpong, executive director of the Africa-China Centre for Policy and Advisory, said Africa sat on 60 per cent of the world's arable land – which represented a huge, untapped opportunity.

But he said that agricultural potential remained untapped because the continent lacked adequate investment in mechanised agriculture.

"China sees this opportunity and has therefore stepped up to provide the needed support," Frimpong said. "This will certainly create

food security for China, but also for the continent.

"It is the kind of partnership that Africa needs going forward. Getting more from our agricultural potential and creating food security, jobs, increasing export earnings from China by opening its markets to African exports."

Lina Benabdallah, a visiting fellow at the Centre for African Studies at Harvard University, said launching agriculture demonstration centres across Africa was seen by Beijing as a way to share Chinese expertise and knowledge about best practices in growing food, maximising yields, and responding to climate change challenges.

She said there was no evidence China was doing this to produce more food for itself. Rather, it was simply one of its areas of expertise,

and it was easy to establish cooperation based on that.

According to Mandira Bagwandeen, senior researcher at the University of Cape Town's Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, the 2021 FOCAC summit had seen a noticeable shift in China's priorities – from hard infrastructure development to trade and the development of other sectors, including agriculture.

She said China was focusing on agriculture because it was a sector with immense development potential that would be profitable for both Chinese and Africans.

"Although it is reducing its lending for mega infrastructure projects, diverting financial resources to the agricultural sector is still another way for it to maintain a strategic economic standing in Africa," Bagwandeen said.

She said China's relative lack of arable land and massive population made it difficult for the country to be agriculturally self-sufficient, and Africa could fill the gap.

"But African governments must ensure that the Chinese do not just come, harvest, and take," Bagwandeen said.

"African officials must structure Chinese investments in the agriculture sector to help advance and industrialise the agricultural industry in the region. An emphasis must be placed on ensuring knowledge and skills transfer in agricultural science and practices."

South China Morning Post

CHINA WATCH

INTEREST in China is growing, yet most news and analysis outside the country is produced by mainstream media from the global north. To provide Chinese perspectives, the *Dongsheng Collective* – researchers from various countries – offers a China digest. This is an edited selection. <https://dongshengnews.org/en>

Moon water found

CHINESE scientists have discovered a reservoir of water on the Moon inside glass spheres and know how they originated. The molten and cooled rocks were generated by the solar wind and contain water molecules. Researchers estimate that the Moon has about 270 trillion kg of water stored in these spheres, and that this process could produce water on other airless planetary bodies in the solar system such as Mercury. Lunar soil samples were collected by the Chinese Chang'e-5 mission in 2020, the first to do so since a Soviet Union mission in 1976.

Reuters

Honduran visit plan

AFTER initiating diplomatic relations with China, the Honduran government has announced that President Xiomara Castro will travel to China soon. China also invited a business delegation to discuss co-operation in trade and investment; in a joint statement, the Honduran government acknowledged that Taiwan was an inalienable part of the territory – the island has lost nine allies since Tsai Ing-wen took over in 2016, and now has diplomatic relations with only 13 countries.

Caixin Global

TikTok not a threat

CHINA says a US congressional hearing with the CEO of TikTok presented no evidence of a national security threat. A Chinese government spokesperson said the country had never and would never ask companies or individuals to violate local laws to collect or provide data and information; after an indictment hearing that lasted more than five hours.

Global Times

Investments increase

CHINA'S non-financial investments abroad increased 35.7 per cent in the first two months of 2023 in year-on-year comparison, reaching 136 billion yuan (US\$19.76 billion). The wholesale and retail sector saw a 17.2 per cent increase in investments in the period, while leasing and business services grew 22.3 percent to US\$4.72 billions.

Global Times

Salty soil gene coup

CHINESE scientists have identified a gene that allows crops to be grown in salty soil and produce modified sorghum and rice seeds that improve yields by 20 percent. Varieties grown in saline-alkaline soil have a longer growth cycle and accumulate more nutrients, so they taste better, according to the researchers.

South China Morning Post

Rivers and lakes plan

CHINA has unveiled a plan to restore 78 rivers and 10 lakes over the next two years, seeking to combat pollution and water shortages. The plan will focus on cleaning up three types of rivers and lakes: those located in key national development regions; those that will have a major impact on flood control, water supply, and ecological security; and those that the most polluted.

South China Morning Post

A major shift in power is taking place and the US is opposing it

Larger developing countries, such as China, Brazil, India, Mexico, Indonesia, and South Africa, are pivoting away from reliance upon the United States and its Western allies, and have begun to discuss a new architecture for a new world order, Tricontinental's **Vijay Prashad** writes

ON FEBRUARY 24 this year, the Chinese Foreign Ministry released a 12-point plan titled "China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis".

This "peace plan", as it has been called, is anchored in the concept of sovereignty, building upon the well-established principles of the United Nations Charter (1945) and the Ten Principles from the Bandung Conference of African and Asian states held in 1955. The plan was released two days after China's senior diplomat Wang Yi visited Moscow, where he met with Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

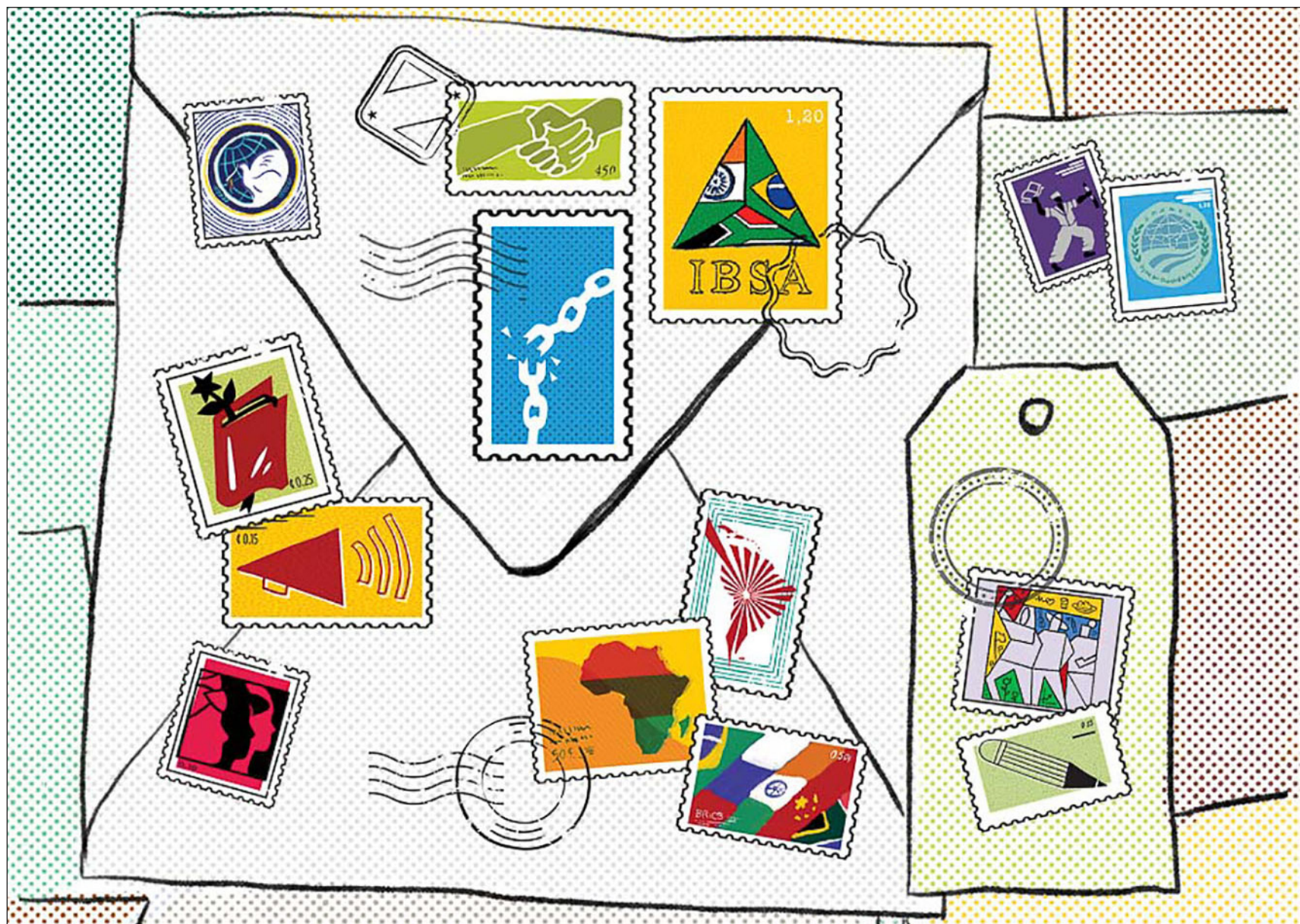
Russia's interest in the plan was confirmed by Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov shortly after the visit: "Any attempt to produce a plan that would put the [Ukraine] conflict on a peace track deserves attention. We are considering the plan of our Chinese friends with great attention."

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky welcomed the plan hours after it was made public, saying that he would like to meet China's President Xi Jinping as soon as possible to discuss a potential peace process. France's President Emmanuel Macron echoed this sentiment, saying that he would visit Beijing in early April.

There are many interesting aspects of this plan, notably a call to end all hostilities near nuclear power plants and a pledge by China to help fund the reconstruction of Ukraine. But perhaps the most interesting feature is that the peace plan did not come from any country in the West, but from Beijing.

When I read "China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis", I was reminded of "On the Pulse of Morning", a poem published by Maya Angelou in 1993, the rubble of the Soviet Union before us, the terrible bombardment of Iraq by the United States still producing aftershocks, with the tremors felt in Afghanistan and Bosnia. Two sections of the poem bear repeating:

*Each of you, a bordered country,
Delicate and strangely made proud,
Yet thrusting perpetually under
siege.
Your armed struggles for profit
Have left collars of waste upon
My shore, currents of debris upon
my breast.
Yet today I call you to my riverside,
If you will study war no more.*



A series of postage stamps with the logos and symbols of multilateral institutions that are being imagined to further a new world order.

*Come,
Clad in peace, and I will sing the
songs
The Creator gave to me when I
and the
Tree and the rock were one.
Before cynicism was a bloody sear
across your
Brow and when you yet knew you
still
Knew nothing.
The River sang and sings on.
History, despite its wrenching pain
Cannot be un-lived, but if faced
With courage, need not be lived
again.*

History cannot be forgotten, but it need not be repeated. That is the message of Angelou's poem and the message of the study we released recently *Eight Contradictions of the Imperialist "Rules-Based Order"* (see Pages 6/7).

Confidence

In October 2022, Cuba's Centre for International Policy Research (CIPI) held its 7th Conference on Strategic Studies, which studied the shifts taking place in international relations, with an emphasis on the declining power of the Western states and the emergence of a new confidence in the developing world.

There is no doubt that the United States and its allies continue to exercise immense power over the world through military force and control over financial systems. But with the economic rise of several developing countries, with China at their head, a qualitative change can be felt on the world stage.

An example of this trend is the ongoing dispute among the G20 countries, many of which have re-

The United States is attempting to maintain its position of 'single master' through an aggressive military and diplomatic push both in Ukraine and Taiwan, unconcerned about the great destabilisation this has inflicted upon the world . . . it is a concern that has led most of the countries in the world to refuse to join efforts to isolate Russia

fused to line up against Moscow despite pressure by the United States and its European allies to firmly condemn Russia for the war in Ukraine. This change in the geopolitical atmosphere requires precise analysis based on the facts.

To that end, our latest dossier, *Sovereignty, Dignity, and Regionalism in the New International Order*, March 2023, (see <https://thetricontinental.org/dossier-regionalism-new-international-order/>) produced in collaboration with CIPI, brings together some of the thinking about the emergence of a new global dispensation that will follow the period of US hegemony.

The text opens with a foreword by CIPI's director, José R. Cabañas Rodríguez, who makes the point that the world is already at war, namely a war imposed on much of

the world (including Cuba) by the United States and its allies through blockades and economic policies, such as sanctions that strangle the possibilities for development. As Greece's former Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis said, coups these days "do not need tanks. They achieve the same result with banks".

The US is attempting to maintain its position of "single master" through an aggressive military and diplomatic push both in Ukraine and Taiwan, unconcerned about the great destabilisation this has inflicted upon the world. This approach was reflected in US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin's admission that "We want to see Russia weakened" and in US House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul's statement that "Ukraine today – it's going to be Taiwan tomorrow". It is a concern about this destabilisation and the declining fortunes of the West that has led most of the countries in the world to refuse to join efforts to isolate Russia.

As some of the larger developing countries, such as China, Brazil, India, Mexico, Indonesia, and South Africa, pivot away from reliance upon the United States and its Western allies, they have begun to discuss a new architecture for a new world order. What is quite clear is that most of these countries – despite great differences in the political traditions of their respective governments – now recognise that the United States "rules-based international order" is no longer able to exercise the authority it once had.

The actual movement of his-

tory shows that the world order is moving from one anchored by US hegemony to one that is far more regional in character. US policy-makers, as part of their fearmongering, suggest that China wants to take over the world, along the grain of the "Thucydides Trap" argument that when a new aspirant to hegemony appears on the scene, it tends to result in war between the emerging power and existing great power. However, this argument is not based on facts.

Rather than seek to generate additional poles of power – in the mould of the United States – and build a "multipolar" world, developing countries are calling for a world order rooted in the UN Charter as well as strong regional trade and development systems.

Respect

"This new internationalism can only be created and a period of global Balkanisation avoided", we write in our latest dossier, "by building upon a foundation of mutual respect and strength of regional trade systems, security organisations, and political formations". Indicators of this new attitude are present in the discussions taking place in the Global South about the war in Ukraine and are reflected in the Chinese plan for peace.

Our dossier analyses at some length this moment of fragility for US power and its "rules-based international order". We trace the revival of multilateralism and regionalism, which are key concepts of the emerging world order.

The growth of regionalism is reflected in the creation of a host of vital regional bodies, from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), alongside increasing regional trade (with the BRICS bloc being a kind of "regionalism plus" for our period).

Meanwhile, the emphasis on returning to international institutions for global decision-making, as evidenced by the formation of the Group of Friends in Defence of the UN Charter, for example, illustrates the reinvigorated desire for multilateralism.

The United States remains a powerful country, but it has not come to terms with the immense changes taking place in the world order. It must temper its belief in its "manifest destiny" and recognise that it is nothing more than another country among the 193 members states of the United Nations.

The great powers – including the United States – will either find ways to accommodate and cooperate for the common good, or they will collapse together.

At the start of the pandemic, the head of the World Health Organisation, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, urged the countries of the world to be more collaborative and less confrontational, saying that "this is the time for solidarity, not stigma" and repeating, in the years since, that nations must "work together across ideological divides to find common solutions to common problems". These wise words must be heeded.

Tricontinental

Ethiopia looks to China over debts after G20-led failure

Finance on the agenda during delegation's visit to Beijing

Jevans Nyabiage

WITH no sign of progress in a G20-led debt-relief initiative, cash-strapped Ethiopia is turning directly to China for a way out of its loan problems.

Debt was reportedly one of the issues under discussion when Ethiopian Finance Minister Ahmed Shide led a high-level delegation to China recently.

As well as meeting Chinese Finance Minister Liu Kun and Jin Zhongxia, from the People's Bank of China, the delegation held talks with key Chinese financial institutions and creditors, including the China Export-Import Bank of China, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) and China Development Bank (CDB).

The trip came soon after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed visited Europe to raise funds for the reconstruction.

The trip included talks with Emmanuel Macron, the president of France, which co-chairs with China the Group of 20's Common Framework creditor committee for Ethiopia.

The framework is an initiative for restructuring government debt aimed at low-income countries and Ethiopia requested debt restructuring under the framework in early 2021.

But so far there has been no tangible result.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund claim China has been frustrating the talks while Beijing says since multilateral and commercial lenders hold most of the debt, they should take most of the burden in the restructuring.

Deborah Brautigam, a professor of international political economy at Johns Hopkins University and founding director of the China Africa Research Initiative, said top-level diplomacy had helped some countries attract attention to their debt problems, but it was no guarantee that the problems would be solved.

Committed

Brautigam said China Exim Bank was unlikely to go outside the G20 framework but other lenders, such as CDB, might strike deals with the Ethiopian government outside formal arrangements.

"I do not think that China Exim Bank is going to go outside of the Common Framework process for Ethiopia now that they have committed to it. It's too early for that step," Brautigam said. However, she said, "There are other Chinese creditors in Ethiopia and these talks may concern their loans."

Ethiopia has an estimated US\$13.7 billion debt to China, much of it advanced by China Exim Bank between 2000 and 2021.

The Chinese capital has funded the US\$4.5 billion Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, along with other projects like the capital's Riverside Green Development as well as the light-rail network.

In addition, CDB advanced



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang meet for talks in Addis Ababa

Qin Gang pledges support for reconstruction

CHINA will support reconstruction efforts in the northern region of Ethiopia devastated by the Tigray war, newly appointed Foreign Minister Qin Gang said.

Qin made the pledge during a meeting with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in the capital Addis Ababa on his first stop on a week-long tour of five African nations.

When asked about China's views on Ethiopia's peace deal and the progress of the "Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa" in Ethiopia, Qin Gang said Ethiopia was the common home of all Ethiopians, including those from the Tigray Region.

With the ceasefire agreement recently reached between the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front being steadily implemented, Ethiopia has entered a new stage with a hope for peace and a focus on development. China was "truly happy about this and extends warm congratulations to the government and people of Ethiopia", Qin Gang said.

US\$753 million in 2012 and 2013 for the development of small- and medium-size enterprises and three sugar factories in Ethiopia, according to the Chinese Loans to Africa Database at Boston University's Global Development Policy Centre.

Further, contractors such as Huawei, ZTE and State Grid Corporation of China have advanced a total of US\$4.1 billion for the country's digital and power connections. ICBC provided two loans worth US\$975 million for a hydro-power project and the Omo-Kuraz sugar factory.

But the country fell into a financial mess amid the COVID pandemic and a two-year civil war.

Kevin P. Gallagher, director of the Global Development Policy Centre, said the Common Framework was too flawed for Ethiopia to stand idly any longer.

"They are smart to move to 'by any means necessary mode' but if they cannot secure commensurate treatment from its other major creditors, money saved from China will have to go to other creditors

rather than to mount a recovery and meet its development and climate needs," Gallagher said.

Besides looking to restructure the debts, the country is also wooing Chinese investors for the reconstruction of the economy.

During the trip to Beijing, China and Ethiopia signed a memorandum of understanding to establish an investment and economic cooperation working group.

Hannah Ryder, chief executive officer of Development Reimagined, a Beijing-based consultancy, said the answer to debt relief was not the G20 Common Framework.

"Borrowers were able to negotiate debt relief and restructuring with China themselves in years past, they don't need the IMF/Paris Club to advocate for them," she said.

In addition, Ryder said, "Every creditor is different, there is no one-size-fits all approach. But borrowers can do better by coordinating with each other and learning about the various deals they have struck with creditors, and seeking the best outcomes, bilaterally

He said China had always believed that the conflict in the Tigray Region was an internal affair of Ethiopia and that the Ethiopian people had the wisdom and ability to independently resolve their internal differences.

"China has always respected Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and supported the Ethiopian government and people's efforts to achieve national peace, unity and development; China has always supported African people in solving African problems in African ways," he said.

Qin Gang stressed that the Horn of Africa was a region of strategic importance and had a major impact on the peace and stability of Africa and even the Middle East.

He noted that the "Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa" put forward by China was aimed at supporting countries in the region to seek strength through unity and achieve prosperity and stability.

Recalling the multiple visits to countries in the region by the Special Envoy for the

Horn of Africa Affairs of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qin Gang said that China supported the convening of the inaugural Horn of Africa Peace Conference, and made positive contributions to building consensus among all parties and promoting peace and development in the region.

He said, China had provided food, vaccines and other humanitarian supplies to Ethiopia to help ease the livelihood difficulties of people in conflict-affected areas and would continue to do so as well as actively participating in the reconstruction of conflict-affected areas. He also called on the international community to increase humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia and support the reconstruction and economic and social development of the relevant regions.

Beijing was willing to expand bilateral cooperation in various fields and would "encourage more Chinese companies to invest in Ethiopia and participate in the reconstruction process".

Agencies

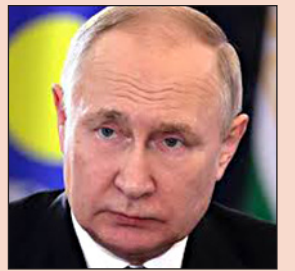
Besides Ethiopia, Ghana, which defaulted on most of its external debts, plans to send a team to Beijing for debt restructuring negotiations.

Ghana's Ministry of Finance said that a Chinese delegation recently ended a three-day mission to engage the government of Ghana, following a request for the restructuring of Ghana's US\$1.9 billion debt owed to China.

The team visited Accra ahead of Ghana's coming mission to China, all in line with ongoing negotiations for a sovereign debt treatment. "Scheduled meetings are progressing well, and discussions have so far been highly cordial and fruitful," Ghana's Ministry of Finance said.

Zambia, which also applied to the G20 initiative after defaulting on some of its foreign debt, is awaiting the decision of bilateral lenders to restructure its debts amid a standoff between China and the World Bank on whether the Bretton Woods institution should provide debt relief.

South China Morning Post



Vladimir Putin

Putin says deeper ties with Africa 'is a key goal'

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin says that deepening ties between Russia and Africa is a key goal for the Kremlin, as Moscow seeks to expand its influence on the continent.

Speaking in a televised address, he said that Russia would continue supplying the continent with grain if Moscow exited a landmark agreement with Ukraine to allow exports from the country's Black Sea ports.

"Let me emphasise that our country has always given, and will continue to give, priority to cooperation with African states," Putin said in the address at a conference on Russian-African relations.

Putin said Russia would continue to deliver grain, regardless of the status of the deal.

"If we decide not to extend this deal after 60 days, then we are ready to supply free of charge the volumes that were sent to the countries most in need in Africa," he said.

The deal brokered by Turkey and the United Nations in July last year, and signed by Kyiv and Moscow, had allowed for the safe passage of exports. It was extended for 120 days in November.

Turkey has announced the extension of the deal that has allowed Ukraine to export grain following Russia's offensive, but Moscow has said it only agreed to a 60-day extension, not 120 days.

Putin's comments come as Moscow is seeking deeper political, economic and military ties in Africa and Asia with Russia becoming increasingly isolated on the international stage over the conflict in Ukraine.

Russia, a key arms exporter to Africa, is making forays into the continent including through mining projects granted to the Wagner private paramilitary group.

Putin also said Russia would share its technologies with African nations and continue helping them produce electricity.

Russia has been expanding its influence in Africa in recent years and Putin said he believes the continent will continue increasing its authority and role in the "emerging multipolar world order".

Putin is scheduled to host African leaders in June for the Russia-Africa summit – the second of its kind.

AFP/Xinhua

Finger of suspicion points at the USA over Nord Stream sabotage

Blinken's initial denial shown to be a lie and he later described the bombing as 'a tremendous opportunity'

Andre Damon

ON SEPTEMBER 30 last year US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was asked by a reporter if the US or its allies were to blame for the attacks that destroyed the Nord Stream pipelines between Russia and Germany three days earlier.

"I really have nothing to say to the absurd allegation from President Putin that we or other partners or allies are somehow responsible for this," Blinken said.

Asked about claims by Russian officials that the US was responsible for the attacks, US President Biden replied after the bombings, "Just don't listen to what Putin's saying. What he's saying we know is not true."

Six months later, the New York Times and Washington Post carried news reports based on interviews with intelligence officials, asserting that a "pro-Ukraine group" destroyed the pipelines.

In a separate article, the German newspaper Die Zeit stated that the attack was carried out from a yacht owned by two Ukrainians operating from Germany. Building on that narrative, the Times of London reported that the attack was carried out via a "private venture originating in Ukraine." The newspaper added, "The name of the suspected private sponsor, a Ukrainian not affiliated with President Zelensky's government, has been circulating in intelligence circles for months but not revealed."

This flood of news reports follows the publication by veteran journalist Seymour Hersh of a report that the US Navy directly planted the explosives that destroyed the pipelines, using military operations in the Baltic Sea as a cover.

Based on his contacts within the military and state apparatus, Hersh reported that the plan for the attack began in December 2021, months before the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

All variants of the story have one thing in common. They show that Blinken was lying on September 30. The US "or other partners or allies" clearly did carry out the bombing.

With regard to the reports in the Times and the Post, the notion that a massive, highly-sophisticated international undersea terror attack simultaneously destroying four separate pipelines would have been launched by Ukrainians operating from Germany without the knowledge of the Ukrainian government,



Unidentified drones were spotted near offshore installations days before Nord Stream attack, according to a letter from Norwegian energy security agency

Germany, or the United States is laughable.

If the "pro-Ukrainian" group was in fact responsible, it was, at the least, carrying out the openly stated wishes of the White House, which vowed to "end" the existence of the pipeline. Whether the US Navy carried out the bombing, or had its Ukrainian proxy forces do it, the United States is clearly to blame.

Biden himself had declared that the US would "bring an end to" the pipeline as part of a war over Ukraine, and US officials gloated over the destruction after it happened. In congressional testimony in January, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland said, "I think the administration is very gratified to know that Nord Stream 2 is now, as you like to say, a hunk of metal at the bottom of the sea."

These revelations confirm what the World Socialist Web Site wrote on September 28: "Accusations of Russian involvement in the bombings lack all credibility and detract from the far more likely perpetrator: the United States. The first question that has to be asked about the Nord Stream bombing is: Cui bono? Who benefits, and who had the motive to carry it out?"

The exact wording from Joe Biden was, 'If Russia invades there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2, we will bring an end to it.' And when a reporter asked how exactly he intended to do it, given that the project was within the control of Germany, Biden just said, 'I promise we will be able to do it.'

*Seymour Hersh
Pulitzer Prize-winning
Investigative journalist*

<https://thewire.in/world/seymour-hersh-us-destroyed-nord-stream-pipeline-interview>

The revelations also fully implicate the entire US media in an effort to blame Russia for the crime. Responding to the attack on Russian energy infrastructure, the Washington Post wrote on September 27:

The leaks are more likely a message: Russia is opening a new front on its energy war against Europe. First, it weaponised gas supply, halting shipments, including via the Nord Stream pipeline. Now, it may be attacking the energy infrastructure it once used to ship its energy.

The Heritage Foundation, a US think tank, declared, "Russia's Attack on Nord Stream Pipelines Means Putin Has Truly Weaponised Energy."

Critically, even after the exposure of the US's lies, the cover-up continued. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius suggested that the evidence of Ukrainian involvement in the attack may have been a "false flag" operation conducted by Russia. "We have not been able to determine who was behind [it]," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

The exposure of the involvement of the US or its proxy forces in Ukraine fits a definite pattern, including the assassination of the Russian fascist intellectual Daria Dugina and the bombing of the Kerch Bridge, in which US and Ukrainian officials categorically declared that they had no involvement, only for subsequent media

reports to attribute the attacks to the Ukrainian government.

Just minutes after Blinken flatly denied that the US had carried out the bombing on September 30, he gave a very clear explanation of the United States' motive for the attack. Blinken declared: "And ultimately this is also a tremendous opportunity. It's a tremendous opportunity to once and for all remove the dependence on Russian energy and thus to take away from Vladimir Putin the weaponisation of energy as a means of advancing his imperial designs. That's very significant, and that offers tremendous strategic opportunity for the years to come."

Indeed, major US energy companies profited massively from this "opportunity," selling Europe record quantities of liquefied natural gas at record prices, and fueling record profits. The US and NATO allies utilised it as an "opportunity" to justify a further expansion of the war.

There can be little doubt that the collapse of the official narrative of the bombing was a major subject of discussions between US President Joe Biden and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz recently. But the concern of Biden and Scholz was how

to manage the popular reaction and outrage to the exposure, and how to ensure that this criminal act would not lead to the expansion of popular opposition to the war.

The exposure of US complicity in the bombing of Nord Stream pipeline raises ominous and troubling questions. If the United States was capable of carrying out what was in effect an act of war and international terrorism, not only against Russia but against Germany, what else is it capable of?

It remains an inescapable fact that after the US pledged itself to the most sweeping and far-reaching goals in the Ukraine war, the Ukrainian military is suffering major setbacks on the battlefield. There exists no public support for further escalation of the war, much less the deployment of NATO troops necessary for the achievement of these aims.

There has been a definite tendency in the history of US imperialism to respond to the exposure of one reckless lie by concocting another, even bigger and more reckless lie to take its place. The working class must be on the lookout for another US provocation that would suit this purpose.

wsws.org

Protests over US war machine on anniversary of Iraq invasion

ON MARCH 18, the 20th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, thousands of anti-war protesters gathered in Lafayette Park, in front of the White House. They demanded an end to the endless US wars of the past 20 years, particularly the proxy conflict in Ukraine.

Just in front of the musicians and speakers, eight coffins were draped in flags of various nations struck by the US war machine, representing those needlessly killed in the past 20 years of war and sanctions. The protesters marched to the White House front fence carrying the coffins to confront President Joe Biden for his responsibility for the many deaths because of US aggression.

The march then proceeded to the headquarters of the Washington Post. Speakers accused the Post of complicity in 20 years of war as well, calling the Post "the stenographers of empire".

Brian Becker, national director of the ANSWER Coalition, denounced this war mongering publication from the rally's



Coffins draped in flags of nations struck by the US war machine over the past 20 years

stage, "We know who you are. You're not journalists, you're an echo chamber for the war machine, and you too are guilty for the deaths of all these people." Nearly 300 organisations, including peace groups, socialist organisations, anti-war veterans'

groups, organisations fighting for Black liberation and many others supported the demonstration that was initiated by the ANSWER Coalition, Eugene Puryear of the ANSWER Coalition, framed the protest to the crowd.

"They want you to somehow think that it's progressive, that it's good, that it's morally right to spend hundreds of billions of dollars, to fight to the last Ukrainian. For what? Just for the ability of the US government to control the whole globe!"

Puryear continued, "They are giving themselves the right to tell every single other person what to do, and if you don't, they'll sanction you, bomb you, destroy your country, cripple your people, end people's dreams and hopes of a better future."

Jill Stein of the Green Party warned about the nuclear threat posed by escalation between nuclear powers. "These are not like the Hiroshima bombs of decades ago. These are a thousand times stronger."

Becker noted in his speech, "What we're doing today, I believe, will be remembered as something quite historic, something very profound – a commitment, a determination on our part to build a new anti-war movement."

Liberation



WHAT TYPE OF DEMOCRACY SHOULD WE CHOOSE?

THE US wants us to adopt its form of democracy in which the minority dominates the majority and political power serves the interests of capital and not the people.

The rich minority is increasingly decisive in US democracy and political power tends to serve the wealthy few, making it increasingly difficult to meet the aspirations of the people.

The US regards “protecting human rights” as one of the reasons for promoting democracy abroad, yet between 2015 and 2019 more than 38,000 deaths per year were related to gun violence there, 20 per cent of whom were under 18 years old.

Regarding ethnic minorities, 229 black people have been killed by the police since George Floyd’s death and the FBI reported an increase of hate crimes against people of Latino and Hispanic (by 21 percent, 2019) and Asian (by 150 per cent, 2020) backgrounds.

The US exports its democratic system, which has directly led to years of war in many countries, includ-

ing in Iraq and Afghanistan, where 20 years of invasion led to 241,000 people being killed. This has made the US a veritable “refugee maker”. Is this the type of democracy we should all embrace, adopt? A minority democracy? A money democracy?

What is the difference between this US form of democracy and that which prevailed under the slave-owning society and feudal society, where democracy was partial – and not absolute – and was only enjoyed by those who owned land and slaves, where to vote and be voted for one had to show ownership of land and slaves?

We accept that in a class society democracy cannot be absolute. It can only be partial. Dialectically, every class society is both a democracy and a dictatorship at the same time. The slave-owning society and the feudal society were both democracies and dictatorships at the same time. They were democracies in so far as the slave owners and feudal lords who could vote and be voted for were concerned. But they were dictator-

ships for the slaves and peasants or serfs who could not vote or be voted for.

This is not very different from what we see in the United States and Western countries today. These are democracies for their trifling rich minorities but dictatorships for the great majority of their people. In reality they are oligarchies rather than democracies.

And all this is very different from China, where the interests of the majority take precedence over the interests of the minority, and where money or wealth doesn’t make one a ruler. And since China is also a class society, it can be said to be a democracy for the majority, one we can call a dictatorship of the majority, the working people.

With poverty levels hitting over 80 per cent in some regions of Zambia and rural poverty averaging 76.6 per cent, what type of democracy should Zambians choose? The Chinese or United States form of democracy? Which path should we take? Which way should we go?

Fred M’membe, Socialist Party President

**JUSTICE
EQUITY
PEACE**

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