



**Communist Party USA
29th National Convention
May 21-23, 2010
New York City**

Convention Discussion Document

International Issues and U.S. Foreign Policy

This document is intended to provide a framework and stimulus for the Communist Party USA pre-convention discussion leading up to the May 2010 national convention. It is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of every issue and every part of the globe. The main purpose is to give a general direction and stimulate discussion on the role of the party and individual Communists in this arena of struggle. The pre-convention discussion itself can provide a chance to fill in gaps and deepen our understanding of issues raised here and related ones.

WORLD REALIGNMENTS, SHIFTING BALANCE OF FORCES

Starting in the 1970s, and accelerating in the 1990s after the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern European socialist states, international capital led by U.S. imperialism embarked on a campaign to impose neoliberal policies at home and across the world - "free" trade which is really trade rigged in favor of the transnational corporations, privatization of the public sector to benefit transnational corporations and local oligarchies, slashing public services like education and health care, and deregulation of private sector activity, including banking and finance.

It is important to note that imperialist foreign and military policies are driven by the most powerful sectors of capitalism, including finance capital and the military-industrial-energy complex. These policies are in direct conflict with the interests of the working class worldwide.

This period also saw incredible new levels of global capitalist integration. With the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc no longer a world counterbalance to imperialism, finance capital felt free to roam the earth gobbling up resources and smashing resistance to its neoliberal policies.

In the emerging capitalist economies of Eastern Europe and in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, these policies led to massive national debt, denationalization of industries and wholesale elimination of essential social programs. The major exception was China which refused to follow the neoliberal directives of the World Bank etc. China, a socialist state and socialist-oriented economy but still a

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developing country, not only got through the Asian crisis relatively unharmed but also shows signs of strength in the current crisis. But many developing economies were pushed to the verge of collapse. The neoliberal policies also spurred massive new patterns of labor migration from the poor countries to the rich ones.

In Western Europe as well, leading capitalist countries adopted the same privatization and financialization policies. Now Europe, along with the U.S., is at the center of the global economic crisis, with countries like Iceland narrowly avoiding a complete economic breakdown.

In the United Nations, the U.S. still wields power through the veto, but it no longer calls all the shots.

Here in the U.S., neoliberal policies exacerbated the three-decade-long widening of the gap between productivity and real wages with cuts in social programs. To fill this gap, finance capital relied on and promoted expansion of consumer debt and successive speculative bubbles. The dismantling of the manufacturing base of the economy accelerated, accompanied by a ferocious attack on organized labor. Economic activity increasingly relied on consumerism, and became dominated by speculative finance schemes. These conditions led to the U.S. economic meltdown and global financial crisis of 2008-2009. This crisis has dealt a shattering blow to the standing of the U.S. economy in the world.

The discrediting of the neoliberal economic model promoted by the U.S. was accompanied by the discrediting of U.S. foreign policy leadership as a result of the disastrous failure of the aggressive militarist policies of the Bush administration, especially its invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The result of these extreme neoliberal/militarist policies was a deepening of contradictions across the globe, the emergence of major challenges to U.S. imperialism from Latin America, China and elsewhere, and the precipitous fall of U.S. standing internationally.

China has emerged as a major economic world power rivaling the U.S. In addition to China, other rising economic powers include Brazil, India and Russia. Most countries in Latin America have to one degree or another rejected neoliberalism, and this next-door-neighbor region that was once a playground for U.S. imperialist exploitation has been establishing new, independent forms of economic cooperation and development. The European Union is a major economic center that is also increasingly acting independently of the U.S.

In the United Nations, the U.S. still wields power through the veto, but it no longer calls all the shots. Other countries are demanding changes to the structure of the UN and other global institutions to reflect the new world balance of forces. The UN in particular is a major arena of struggle with the potential to play an increasingly important role.

Thus U.S. imperialism is facing unprecedented challenges to the unrivaled supremacy it enjoyed for many years. It is being forced to retreat and to grapple with its diminished influence. It is facing growing pressure to restrain its use of military power, even to

demilitarize, to act on climate change, to take responsibility for the deep poverty that keeps most of the world's people earning less than \$2 per day without drinkable water and farmable land, to respect the United Nations and other international bodies, and to respond to and help prevent pandemics and disasters. In other words, it is under pressure from the world community to rethink its understanding of collective and cooperative global security in a way that goes beyond prevention of terrorism and power politics.

NEW INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE: GLOBAL WARMING

A new international challenge now faces the working class and people of the United States and the world: climate change and global warming.

There are struggles in almost every country of the world on this issue. Divisions have emerged between industrially developed countries and developing countries, among various sections of global capital, and within the global working class and people, over who will bear the cost of changing from a fossil-fuel-based world economy to a green-energy economy. Coal miners worry about their jobs. Developing countries worry they will pay for the destruction caused by richer, industrialized countries. Some sections of global capital that accept the science of global warming and have a self-interest in a move away from fossil fuels have clashed with "old guard" capital that reaps profits from oil, gas and coal.

Global warming and the crisis of climate change, in the context of the global economic crisis, presents an urgent new challenge to the working class and people of our country and the world, and to our party.

The facts of global warming present humanity with a timeline for action that, if not met in the short term, will bring punishing effects in the longer-term, changing life on the planet as we know it. The first victims are and will be people in the developing countries and regions who are most vulnerable to droughts, rising sea levels and other climate change impacts. But we are one planet, with a global climate and global economy, and the U.S. will likewise fall victim. This presents not only a challenge but an unprecedented new opportunity for a mass movement to reshape the U.S. and world economies to benefit the people and the planet. It will mean confronting those sections of the U.S. capitalist class that have long reaped huge profits from the fossil-fuel-based economy and that are fighting tooth and nail against any steps that would curb their power.

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AND FOREIGN POLICY

The global realignment of forces is connected with changing political dynamics within our own country.

The new challenges to the global dominance of U.S. finance capital have spurred varying responses from various sections of the U.S. ruling class. The ascendance of the Bush

A new international challenge now faces the working class and people of the United States and the world: climate change and global warming.

administration in 2000 put the most right-wing and militaristic elements in charge of U.S. policy. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and other subsequent attacks around the world further enabled this faction, led primarily by representatives of the military-industrial complex (military contractors, oil and energy concerns, multinational corporations with massive government contracts, etc.) to push a policy of overt confrontation internationally and extreme neoliberal policies at home.

Any gains for the more aggressively imperialist right-wing foreign policy faction undermine the progressive domestic agenda.

Festering discontent over these policies in the U.S. finally boiled over in 2008, particularly in the midst of the most serious economic crisis of capitalism in many decades, and made possible the campaign and victory of Barack Obama. It represented a repudiation of these policies by a majority of Americans.

More sober-minded elements of the ruling class along with progressive forces who propelled Obama into the White House are attempting to shift U.S. foreign policy away from military confrontation and toward a greater or lesser degree of cooperation and diplomacy. But there are differences on how to do this and how far to go. At the same time, militarist sections of the ruling class and those pushing a neoliberal agenda are hard at work to regain momentum and retake control over U.S. policy. These contradictory forces are all represented within the Obama administration.

The U.S. is still in the stage that we Marxists characterize as monopoly capitalism and imperialism, but this includes different interests and trends that can shape government policies, and it matters which trend and accompanying policies become dominant as far as the interests of the masses of working people are concerned - an ultra-right policy of open military aggression or a more realistic policy away from military confrontation; an aggressively pro-monopoly neoliberal globalization agenda or a more sober-minded policy of economic cooperation. We saw this in the battle over whether or not to ally with the Soviet Union against fascism in World War II; in the struggle over whether to pursue peaceful coexistence or Cold War military confrontation; in the election struggle over Bush policy versus Obama policy. Objective processes and the shifting balance of forces change what is in the interests of U.S. monopoly capital overall, how different sectors of capital respond, and what it means for the working class and all working people.

Any gains for the more aggressively imperialist right-wing foreign policy faction undermine the progressive domestic agenda that the people's forces hope to accomplish.

The fact that Obama set out in a fundamentally different direction from Bush by word and deed is of great significance. But regardless of what one thinks of Obama as an individual, his administration's policies, foreign and domestic, have been and will continue to be shaped not simply by his own preferences but by objective developments, the changing world balance of forces, the political balance of forces here at home, and the results of the struggle among the contending forces within the administration itself. In some instances, such as the Afghanistan surge or phases of the Honduras crisis, more conservative forces within the administration

and military/intelligence establishment seem to have wielded greater influence over the administration's policy, while in other cases, such as initiatives on nuclear disarmament, re-engagement with the United Nations, diplomatic efforts with Iran and North Korea and pressure on Israel over settlements, more progressive or center forces appear to have had the upper hand.

This is a fluid situation. The overall trajectory of the Obama administration is in the direction of moving away from Bush aggressive superpower militarism, but its exact features, the extent to which it breaks from the imperial policies of the past half-century, are yet to be determined. It will surely depend heavily on the level of grassroots mobilization in our country pressing for progressive policies. Obama's election created a political and democratic opening for broad forces to mobilize and push for stronger reversal of old policies that rely on military might and narrow capitalist class interests, and for more and deeper changes in a progressive direction. This new opening also manifests itself internationally, giving new momentum to movements for peace, nuclear disarmament, political and economic justice, and protecting the environment.

KEY HOTSPOTS AND CHALLENGES

A number of key hotspots and specific challenges play a large role in the struggle to turn our country's foreign policy in a new and better direction. There are divisions in U.S. ruling circles over how to deal with each of these. Those divisions are reflected in the Obama administration and in Congress. The advent of the Obama presidency and Democratic control of Congress greatly expand the opportunities for popular movements to impact what kinds of policies are pursued.

Solving some of the hotspot issues, for example, Afghanistan, means a new kind of U.S. policy that defines U.S. interests in a new way. Rather than the old thinking, seeing these countries and people as pawns in a game of global power (including control of strategic resources like oil), this new foreign policy thinking will redefine U.S. national security and see primary U.S. interests in ensuring that people in these hotspot regions have enough to eat, clean water, electricity, stable livelihoods, education up to and including university, and the ability to develop their own forms of political expression and government.

A new foreign policy for a new era is required. This entails not only a retreat of U.S. imperialism, but also the projection of a new and constructive role for the U.S. government in the world arena. The idea of a positive pro-active role for the U.S. government in world affairs is a very different concept than what many of us are used to, but it is one that can and needs to be fought for and achieved. Again, the opportunities for this today are greater than they have been in some time.

In this document we highlight the struggle to achieve that new kind of foreign policy with regard to Afghanistan, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and U.S. relationships with Iraq, Iran, Africa and our closest neighbor, Latin America - Cuba in particular. Of course there are other

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very important areas and potential flashpoints, including Russia, India and the Kashmir conflict, the Korean peninsula and so on.

In addition, the overall issue of demilitarizing the U.S. global “footprint” is a major one, on which there are differing forces within the Obama administration. Obama has made some initiatives to try to curb Pentagon weapons programs, but powerful entrenched interests are fighting such moves. He has also projected to the fore the issue of nuclear disarmament and made some initial strides in this direction with a new U.S.-Russia arms reduction treaty. This provides an opening for a broad disarmament movement to have an impact.

The escalation of the U.S. military role in Afghanistan is likely to exacerbate problems in Afghanistan and in the broader region.

Demilitarization of our foreign policy has a focal point in Japan, where there is a big popular struggle to get rid of the massive U.S. base in Okinawa. It was a major issue in President Obama’s fall 2009 visit there.

• AFGHANISTAN

The recently announced escalation of the U.S. military role in Afghanistan is likely to exacerbate problems in Afghanistan and neighboring nuclear-armed Pakistan, and in the broader region. Ending the U.S. military role in Afghanistan and Pakistan is clearly a top issue for both its harmful political repercussions internationally and its economic and social cost at home, as well as the mounting human toll of Afghan and U.S. dead and wounded.

Extracting the U.S. military from Afghanistan on a speedy timetable will require a workable and sustainable plan that will help the people of Afghanistan and the region to

recover from more than 30 years of war, much of which has been the direct or indirect result of U.S. imperialist intervention. This will require the U.S. to turn to cooperative international economic development initiatives that make real improvements in the lives of the people in Afghanistan and Pakistan and enable them to construct and expand their civil society and democratic structures.

It is the only way to prevent the Taliban and other reactionary forces from coming to power and to create a better environment for emergence of democratic forces that can replace the corrupt U.S.-imposed Karzai regime . The U.S. military presence allows the Taliban to represent itself as a fighter against foreign occupation. It’s important to remember that Taliban rule resulted in near complete decimation of civil society in Afghanistan, unspeakable atrocities were committed against progressives, ethnic minorities and others, and women were put in virtual slavery. But the Taliban are a legacy of years of U.S. intervention - they would not have existed and certainly would not have had the capacity to come to power if it weren’t for U.S. imperialism. Likewise, al Qaeda, to the extent it exists in the region, is a legacy of U.S. intervention.

Elements of a rapid, sustainable withdrawal plan will include some or all of the following: creation of a broadly representative coalition-type government; a massive international

development aid plan funded through United Nations agencies and local NGOs; and an enhanced role in security, political and economic development for regional blocs involving surrounding countries with a stake in the long-term stability of Afghanistan, including China, Russia, India, Pakistan and Iran. As an immediate step, the U.S. can speed up its military pullout by calling on the UN and regional powers to deploy a temporary international peacekeeping force that will not include U.S. or NATO forces.

• ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

A resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will have major positive global implications for progressive people's movements. It will help resolve other problems, such as tensions with Iran, and remove a rallying cry of reactionary extremist groups. It will open up space for democratic struggles against reactionary regimes in the area, such as in Saudi Arabia and Iran, which have used their supposed championship of Palestinian national rights to help themselves hold onto power.

Amidst all the difficulties of the present situation, the two-state solution continues to be the only solution able to capture the support of the overwhelming majority of both the Palestinian and Israeli population, support that is essential to a viable resolution. It is the only solution that enables the Palestinian people to realize their hopes and struggle for national sovereignty, and that enables the Jewish people of Israel to preserve their sense of a predominantly Jewish state. The struggles over the identity and democratic content of each state will continue well beyond any peace agreement.

The continuation of Israeli settlement construction and expansion in the occupied West Bank, particularly in the East Jerusalem area, is the biggest obstacle to resumption of serious final-status talks. Along with that, the continuing Israeli blockade of Gaza has created an ongoing humanitarian crisis that serves to raise tensions and aggravate divisions among the Palestinian people. At the same time, rocket and other attacks on Israeli civilians by some Palestinian groups have served only to bolster Israeli warhawks.

Obama got off to a good start on the Israel-Palestine issue, but intense opposition from some ruling class sectors to any change in the traditional U.S. policy of one-sided support for Israeli government policies, and a need to deal with other major problems, particularly Afghanistan, appear to have diverted the administration's focus, at least as of late 2009. In addition, there are undoubtedly differences within the administration over how strongly to move on this issue, and what tactics to employ, and there seems to have been some misreading of both Palestinian and Israeli popular sentiments. Nevertheless, there appears to be a significant tilt in this administration away from the one-sided "blank check for the Israeli right" policy, and a belief that settling this conflict is in U.S. interests, even from the ruling class perspective. The parallel emergence of a pro-peace movement within the U.S. Jewish community represents an important shift in the political dynamics in our country, and it is significant that this

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development has been welcomed by the White House and many in Congress. That presents an enormous opportunity to finally resolve this 60-year-old conflict in a positive way.

• IRAQ

Despite the much longer time frame than many in the progressive movement would like, the Obama administration continues to be on track to follow the Iraq withdrawal schedule set forth in the Status of Forces Agreement. Most U.S. forces have already retreated to their bases, and the agreement calls for a complete withdrawal of all U.S. forces (combat and otherwise) and the closing of all bases by the end of 2011. Some in the U.S. military and others on the right (including certain elements within the Obama administration) have been pushing for long-term U.S. military presence in Iraq. So far, Obama has resisted that, but a full commitment to withdrawal can only be ensured if there is a push back against these right-wing forces from below.

Within Iraq, left/progressive forces and the Iraqi labor movement are struggling to expand democratic and political rights, create new effective labor laws, and build a modern, democratic, multi-ethnic state that is able to develop Iraq free of domination by U.S. transnational corporate interests. The success of those efforts can have an important positive impact on democratic people's movements elsewhere in the region, and in our own country. An important contribution to that struggle can be played by the AFL-CIO, which has already taken initiatives to develop links with Iraqi unions.

• IRAN

The Obama administration has sought to reverse the Bush policy of confrontation with Iran and has tried to engage the Iranian government in negotiations. These must be seen as positive steps that should be encouraged and supported. They can have an enormous impact in solving other problems in the region, including Afghanistan, Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

Within Iran, in the past five years, the most reactionary, militarist elements of the Revolutionary Guard have taken over many of the governmental bodies, public enterprises and even private businesses (through massive privatization campaigns). They have become a de facto parasitic capitalist class with control over much of the economy, political structures, and the military. The fraudulent elections of June 2009 were part of this realignment of forces.

This has resulted in conflicts and unrest across class lines, including among sections of the ruling capitalist class. The opposition movement that emerged during the elections was a product of these contradictions playing out in the open. The opposition is a loose multi-class coalition which includes sections of the working class, the student and women's movements, and elements of the national bourgeoisie.

The Obama administration's initiatives on diplomatic engagement with Iran are important, even as there are pressures in Washington to pursue a confrontational policy that could lead to military conflict. Supporting the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people against the reactionary regime is not in contradiction to supporting diplomatic openings with Iran and defusing tensions.

• LATIN AMERICA

Since the election of Hugo Chavez as president of Venezuela in 1999, the Latin American-Caribbean region has shown a marked leftward trend. In quick succession, left or left-center led governments have come to power in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Only the governments of Peru, Mexico, Colombia and Panama are still in rightist hands, and the Peruvian government is beleaguered by large-scale worker, peasant and indigenous mobilizations.

This movement toward the left has been made possible by a number of factors, including:

- **successful mass organizing and mobilization of workers, peasants, indigenous people and others against the neoliberal programs that were sharply undermining their well being,**
- **the ability of Venezuela, working with socialist Cuba, to create alternative trade and aid formations, leading toward a bloc of nations increasingly independent of the control of U.S. imperialism,**
- **the increasing capacity of the large and increasingly industrialized economy of Brazil to support this independent, left-trending movement, and**
- **the alternative source of trade provided by the People's Republic of China.**

However, this leftward trend is not unstoppable, and is contested by still-powerful reactionary forces in the traditional landowning and also business, trade and banking oligarchies, the higher ranks of the officer corps and the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. These sectors work closely with the right wing in the United States and U.S.-based corporations. The 2009 coup in Honduras is an example of this.

The Obama administration's initiatives in the area started out propitiously with Obama's refusal to interfere in the elections in El Salvador in March, positive statements during the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad in April, and the removal of Bush-era restrictions on the right of Cuban Americans to visit their relatives in Cuba or send them money. The initial statements of Obama opposing the Honduras coup were also an important break from past U.S. practices.

But other steps have caused concern. These include the announcement that the U.S. military would be using seven more military bases in Colombia, with the possibility that those bases would be used to oppose left-wing governments all over the region, and the State Department's statement that it would accept the results of Honduras elections held under the coup government. It appears the Obama administration has yet to develop a consistent approach to Latin America that decisively breaks with old superpower policies.

On Cuba, the administration appears to be proceeding cautiously. But there is growing bipartisan support for ending the ban on travel to Cuba, and on ending the economic blockade. Some of the strongest support comes from Republicans representing agricultural states who would benefit from opening up trade with Cuba. This bodes well for building a very broad U.S. movement to normalize U.S.-Cuba relations, and included in that, free the Cuban Five.

The role of the U.S. labor movement is especially important with regard to Latin America. Among other international labor initiatives, the Steelworkers union and others have been actively involved in solidarity work with Colombian trade unionists. The Steelworkers have also taken the lead in supporting Mexican mine and metal workers against attacks by the right-wing Calderon government. They and other sectors of U.S. labor have shown exemplary solidarity with members of the independent Mexican electricians' union, SME, which is currently threatened with government-initiated dissolution. It is also encouraging that this year, the AFL-CIO came out firmly against the right-wing coup in Honduras.

• AFRICA

Since the collapse of the USSR and Eastern European socialism, sub-Saharan Africa has been subjected to a pitiless offensive by transnational capital, which has resulted in sharp declines in living standards in an already poor region. Increasing desertification, the massive impact of the AIDS crisis, the loss of aid from former socialist countries, and the aggressive imposition of neoliberal trade arrangements have reversed progress in many countries. This, in turn, has led to civil conflicts and massive population migrations. In several countries of the continent, the looting of national resources by transnational corporations has been accompanied by brutal military action by state and non-state actors, amounting in some cases to genocidal killings. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently the worst, but not the only African state subjected to these conditions. An important new development is that the ALBA group of left-led countries in Latin America has been trying to develop a cross-Atlantic trade and aid bloc that will help African countries break away from the domination of imperialism and the neoliberal model imposed by the rich capitalist countries. China is also offering alternative sources of trade and development to the nations of Africa.

The discrediting of neoliberalism and the advent of the Obama administration, with the prospect of a greater "feel" for the peoples of Africa, offers a big opportunity to push to reshape the U.S. relationship with that continent, away from treating it as an afterthought and dumping ground for often-toxic U.S. products, along with a focus on military bases and strategy (AFRICOM), toward one of mutual economic, social and cultural interests.

PEACE MOVEMENT AND ITS ROLE

The election of Barack Obama represented a repudiation by the American people of the Bush domestic and foreign policies. This victory, and in fact, the early success of Obama's candidacy, was in no small measure due to the growing sentiments against the Iraq war and against the Bush foreign policy in general.

The election reflected a maturing of the progressive forces and grassroots coalitions in the face of the Bush administration's extreme neoliberal policies and the crisis that resulted. Labor, and especially its organized core, helped cement the key social forces (African American, Latino, Asian and other racially and nationally oppressed communities, women and youth) into opposition to these policies and was critical to the election of Obama. The majority U.S. peace sentiment against the war in Iraq was a key element in this development.

Organized labor itself, for the first time since the 1930s, began to seriously oppose U.S. foreign policy on the war and on so-called free-trade issues while reaching out to labor around the world in search of solidarity against finance capital and the giant transnational corporations.

UFPJ and the broader U.S. peace movement played an important part in changing public attitudes toward the war and ultimately in the voters' rejection of McCain-Palin-GOP militarism.

But the election of Obama after eight years of the most right-wing and militaristic administration in recent U.S. history, combined with the impact of the deep economic crisis, created a very different political landscape that many in the progressive movement, and particularly in the peace movement, have found difficult to navigate.

Some narrow left elements within the peace movement insist on lumping the new administration in with the Bush administration, maintaining the same oppositional stance. To be sure, an important task of the peace movement remains opposing and mobilizing against policies that continue the old destructive path, such as the military escalation in Afghanistan. But failure to see the positive developments, even if small, hesitant and inconsistent, and failure to appreciate the significance of the divisions in ruling circles on foreign policy, means missing significant opportunities to build for more and deeper advances. In addition, it leads to isolation of the peace movement from the rest of the all-people's movement particularly labor and African American, Latino and other communities.

In addition, the struggle to move our foreign policy in a progressive direction has to take into account the fact that the economic crisis is now front and center for the American people and the broad movement for change.

The challenge for the peace movement is to greatly widen its ranks and develop new alliances, especially with labor and others fighting in the arena of economic justice, so a broad popular movement emerges that calls for an end to war, a peaceful foreign policy, and the demilitarization of our economy as an integral and essential part of a "new New Deal." The slogan "Jobs not War" has never seemed more appropriate, and can be a centerpiece of such organizing efforts.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNISTS AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY

In this new period, our party can play an indispensable role in helping build a broad movement, involving the core forces of the people's movement with labor at the center, to support the Obama administration's positive steps, defeat the far right and militarism that still maintains enormous power, build a counterweight to any tendencies to capitulate to the right, and help the Obama administration move to end Cold War policies and build multilateral international cooperation to meet the needs of the workers and ordinary people of the world.

The extent to which the Obama administration moves in that direction will depend on the extent to which the progressive electorate is expanded even beyond the movement that elected Obama. It will require a much broader education and mobilization of Americans at

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the grassroots, in order to finally break the grip of the ultra-right, defend positive moves by the administration, push from the bottom to expand and deepen the positive initiatives and oppose policies that serve the old neoliberal forces and their agenda.

The Communist Party and individual Communists have an important role to play in helping bring this kind of strategic and tactical thinking to the peace movement and other social movements, and in helping build the organizational capacity of a broad people's movement for a new foreign policy, intertwined with solving the economic and jobs crises.

It's timely for us to rethink the kinds of involvement we have on peace and foreign policy. We may be thinking too narrowly about what organizations we define as "peace" organizations and what organizations we get involved with to advance peace issues. Community groups, local unions, groups engaged in economic struggles, organizations based on communities of color, youth groups, women's groups, environmental, gay and lesbian, and so on - aren't all of these arenas for building peace sentiment and connecting economic, social and foreign policy issues?

The newly emerging movements around green jobs and global warming are important areas where our party and individual members can make these connections, help promote working class solidarity and social justice at home and abroad, and build unity.

At the same time, it has never been more important to strengthen international working class solidarity, building on important positive steps in this direction by the AFL-CIO and individual U.S. unions. Because of our unique international relationships and our internationalist outlook, our party and Communists in the labor movement can play a particularly important role in this area.

In the long run, our greatest contribution to international working class solidarity is to help build our Communist Party, as part of a broad and powerful working class movement in the United States.

This is one of four official discussion documents issued by the National Committee of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) to engage party members, allies, friends and the public in a discussion of the issues of the day leading up to its 29th National Convention, May 21-23, 2010.

CPUSA members, bodies and collectives are encouraged to submit responses, essays, papers and other contributions to the discussion in order to help determine party policy going forward from the Convention. Submissions may be emailed to discussion2010@cpusa.org or mailed to

Convention Discussion
Communist Party USA
235 West 23rd Street
New York, NY 10011

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