

International Conference of Solidarity in Damascus Calls: **HANDS OFF SYRIA AND PLO!**

Hundreds of prominent figures and topmost leaders of diverse political parties and mass organisations from all over the world converged on Damascus, Syria's capital, at the end of June to participate in one of the most stirring and impressive demonstrations of solidarity witnessed in recent years - the International Conference of Solidarity with Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Timely and Broad

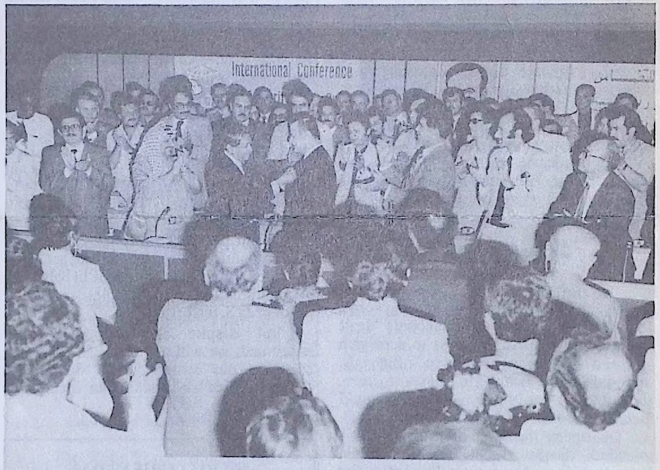
The intensification of U.S. pressure and conspiracies against Syria and the stepped-up Israeli aggression against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples and the threats of war added to the significance of the Conference, which was organised by the World Peace Council in cooperation with the Syrian Peace Council. Its timeliness was reflected in the level and broadness of the participation and in the effective answers it provided for the solution of the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Middle East. Practically all major political trends - Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Communists, Liberals, etc. - as well as national liberation movements and international organisations were represented.

The Conference received messages of greetings from a number of heads of state and government. Among them President Leonid Brezhnev (USSR), President Fidel Castro (Cuba), President Ali Nasser Mohammed (Democratic Yemen), Erich Honecker (GDR), Ahmed Sekoturé (Guinea), Phan Van Dong (Vietnam), Heng Samrin (Kampuchea), Todor Zhivkov (Bulgaria), Jose Eduardo Dos Santos (Angola) and Gustav Husak (Czechoslovakia).

Syria's President Mr. Hafez Al-Assad opened the Conference with a 40-minute major address in which he reviewed the situation in the Middle East and underlined the nature of the imperialist-Israeli conspiracy against his country, the PLO and the Lebanese national movement.

Syria Victim of Plots

We are facing, said President Assad,
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President Hafez Al-Assad of Syria receiving from WPC President Romesh Chandra the Joliot Curie Medal at the opening session of the International Conference of Solidarity with Syria and PLO in Damascus. Seen in the photo (L-R front row): Mr. Abdullah Ahmar, Deputy Secretary General of the Arab Baath Socialist Party; Chairman Yasser Arafat; Mr. Romesh Chandra, President Assad, Mr. Mohammed Jaber Jabjouf, President of the Syrian Peace Council, Mr. Walid Jumblat, Leader of the Lebanese National Movement and Mr. Khaled Mohie El Din, Leader of the Egyptian National Progressive Unionist Party.

WPC Condemns U.S. Arms Aid to Pakistan

In a strongly worded statement the World Peace Council condemned the recent U.S. decision to step up its military aid to Pakistan. "This decision", the statement said, "will introduce a qualitatively new level of sophisticated weapons in the region which will threaten the independence and sovereignty of India and other countries, and endanger peace in Asia and the whole world".

The following is the full text of the statement: "The World Peace Council expresses grave concern at the decision of the U.S. government to give military aid to Pakistan worth 3,000 million dollars under what is termed a new and durable relationship between the two countries.

The new military aid package which includes the supply of F-16 fighter bombers, is unprecedented in its scope and dimension. Never before have such vast sums been allocated by U.S. imperialists for arms aid to

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"brutal imperialist- Israeli-reactionary onslaughts which take various forms of pressure and plots, from within and abroad, never known before throughout the history of our country(which aim at) imposing full imperialist-zionist hegemony on the entire (Middle East) region.

"In the light of this," added President Assad, "we can understand Israel's occupation of part of South Lebanon, and its continuous shelling of Lebanese towns and villages, and Palestinian refugee camps. In the light of this fact, we also can understand Israel's threat against Syria, and its fabrication of the so-called Syrian missile crisis in Lebanon."

"Imperialism and Israel," President Assad continued "want to use us to achieve their designs, occupy our land, displace our people, dominate our region, sow more dissension within our nation. But we want to liberate our territories, recover our homes, and the freedom of our will, to be masters of our sovereignty, to consolidate our independence, and to unify our nation. We want the Palestinian Arab people to establish their state on the soil of their native land."

Imperialism Wants Capitulation

Referring to the Camp David accords, President Assad said that the accords "deal a deadly blow to the process to achieve a just and comprehensive peace." But U.S. imperialism and Israel "do not want peace, they want capitulation which would increase the existing tension."

Discussing the U.S. allegations about a so-called "Soviet threat" to the Middle East, President Assad underlined that the danger was imaginary and any talk of it is meant to perpetuate the subjugation of the Arab people by U.S. imperialism. "They want us to form alliances (with imperialism) and wage a relentless war against the Soviet Union, to "punish" it for the support it gives us and the stand it takes on the side of our just cause, and for extending to us the hand of friendship in order to cooperate together against occupation, expansionism, racism and all forms of aggression and exploitation."

No to Retreat

President Assad concluded his address on a note of determination: "We shall keep working for peace, and struggling against capitulation, heeding no threatOur stand is firm and consistent: no retreat or yielding. No hesitation or defeat."

The opening session, which was attended by the topmost leaders of Syria and high level delegations of the PLO and the Lebanese National Movement, was also



President Assad receiving the delegates to the Conference at the dinner he gave in their honour.

addressed by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and the Leader of the Lebanese National Movement, Walid Jumblat.

Chairman Arafat strongly attacked the U.S. for its staunch support of Israel and continued military build-up and conspiracies in the Middle East. The U.S. Administration, he said, is the main instigator and practitioner of terrorism in the world - the daily Israeli shelling and bombardment of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples, the Israeli raid against the Iraqi nuclear reactor and the genocide practiced against the people of El Salvador, to mention but a few examples, are glaring proof of U.S. terrorism.

But despite all this, Mr. Arafat continued, we will not capitulate. We will continue our struggle until we achieve genuine peace and attain our inalienable national rights.

JOLIOT CURIE MEDAL TO PRESIDENT ASSAD

During the opening session of the International Conference in Solidarity with Syria and the PLO the World Peace Council awarded its highest distinction, the Joliot Curie Medal, to President Hafez Al-Assad of Syria.

The presentation of the award to President Assad was made by Mr. Romesh Chandra who said that the award was conferred on the Syrian President "in recognition of his contribution and that of the Syrian people for the cause of peace and the struggle against imperialism and for friendship among peoples."

In accepting the award President Assad said that he highly appreciates the distinction as an appreciation of the struggle of the Syrian people and the whole Arab nation for liberty, progress and against exploitation and imperialism.

Right Event in Right Place

Earlier, WPC President, Romesh Chandra, told the assembled delegates that the Conference was "the right event in the right place and at the right moment."

We came to Damascus to express our solidarity with Syria, the PLO and the Lebanese National Movement at a time of increased pressure and conspiracies by U.S. imperialism, Israel and reaction which aim at dealing a blow to the Arab anti-imperialist forces and their unity. We tell the U.S. and Israel: Hands off Syria! Hands off the PLO! Hands off Lebanon, said Mr. Chandra.

The four-day Conference (June 22-25) worked in plenary sessions and commissions. The over 400 delegates representing nearly 70 countries from all continents of the world and some 15 international organisations, examined in depth the U.S.-Israeli conspiracies in the wake of the Camp David Accords and the alternative for the achievement of a just peace in the Middle East. They also discussed the U.S. military build-up in the Middle East, the Gulf and Red Sea areas and its implications on the independence and security of the region.

The conclusions of the Conference were summed-up in an Appeal (see text elsewhere in this issue) and 5 resolutions as follows: Solidarity with Syria; the Palestine question; Lebanon; For a Just and Durable Peace in the Middle East; The U.S. military build-up in the Middle East and the Gulf. The Conference also addressed a message to Syrian President, Hafez Al-Assad.

Road to Just Peace

The Conference underlined in its documents that a just peace in the Middle East can only be achieved by Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967, including Arab Jerusalem; guarantee of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people,

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Appeal of Solidarity Conference with Syria and PLO

To all peace forces,
To all militants fighting against war and imperialism and for the liberation of peoples,

To all men and women throughout the world who cherish truth and justice.

The Middle East region is threatened by the very grave danger of a local war launched by Israel. No one can foresee the consequences of such a war which could turn into a war of far wider scope, spreading beyond the neuralgic region affected today.

U.S. imperialism bears the main responsibility for aggravating the situation in this region by endeavouring to include it in its neo-colonialist strategy and to control it completely by setting up military bases and concentrating its Rapid Deployment Force, in line with the imperialist political concept that the Middle East is a U.S. zone of interest. It is the United States which provides Israel with various forms of assistance, including arms for aggression.

The Camp David Agreements and the refusal by the United States to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to find a just solution of the Palestine problem are the root cause of the latest deterioration of the situation.

Israel's escalation of acts of aggression in the region, illustrated particularly by the Israeli attacks against the Arab Peace-keeping Force in Lebanon; the continuation and intensification of Israeli raids against the Lebanese people and the Palestinian Camps; Israel's threats to launch an aggression against

Syria and to occupy Southern Lebanon; its support for the fascist forces with a view to prevent any political solution of the Lebanese crisis; the destruction of the nuclear research centre for peaceful uses in Baghdad; Israel's refusal to sign the international Non-Proliferation Treaty - all this constitutes the preliminaries for such a destructive war.

These flagrant acts of terrorism aimed against the peoples of the Middle East and the Arab Gulf regions constitute overt defiance of the UN Charter and the most elementary human rights. They are a denial of humanity's aspirations for peace, the emancipation of the peoples of the developing countries and the elimination of their sufferings.

They have to see in the context of the global policy of the United States which is threatening all the peoples of the world by having recourse to military might as well as to every kind of pressure.

The Conference strongly condemns these acts; expresses its total and active solidarity with Syria, Lebanon and Palestine; calls upon all men and women of good faith throughout the world to mobilise world public opinion:

- to act with a view to bringing about the immediate cessation of the Israeli aggressions,
- to condemn the aggressive military build-up in the area by the U.S. and its allies, which threatens the peoples of the Middle East and constitutes a danger to peace and security in the whole world.

WPC Condemns Israeli Aggression against Iraq

The World Peace Council vehemently condemned Israel's raid on Iraq's nuclear reactor and called on the United Nations to impose mandatory sanctions on Israel.

In a strongly-worded statement issued on June 10 the WPC called Israel's raid "an act of premeditated and unprovoked aggression which brazenly violates all norms of international conduct as well as international law and the United Nations Charter".

The WPC also castigated Premier Menahem Begin for his threat to commit yet another aggression if Iraq took steps to rebuild its nuclear reactor. "These statements (Begin's statements) and the aggression itself demonstrate beyond doubt that Israel has assigned to itself the role of a gendarme in the Middle East", said the statement.

The World Peace Council underlined the complicity and responsibility of the U.S. in Israel's aggression.

"Without the political, military and economic support of the U.S. and its allies, Israel would not be in a position to consistently ignore and violate United Nations resolutions, and to constantly refuse to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and to guarantee the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people."

Answering Premier Begin's bellicose statements, the World Peace Council said: "Unlike Israel, Iraq is signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and its nuclear installations have been regularly inspected by officers of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency. The Director General of the IAEA, Dr. Sigvard Eklund, has stated that the latest inspection was carried out in January of this year, and the Agency was satisfied that Iraq was abiding by the provisions of the NPT."

The World Peace Council also cabled the President of the U.N. Security Council demanding that the U.N. condemn the Israeli aggression and that mandatory sanctions be imposed against Israel.

A WPC cable to U.N. Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, expressed support to Waldheim's statement and those of several heads of governments condemning the Israeli aggression.

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including the right to return to their homeland, to self-determination and to establishment of their own independent sovereign state. It also emphasised that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian People.

The Conference further welcomed the new Soviet initiative for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned, particularly the PLO.

Visit to Quneitra

On the second day of the Conference, the delegates visited the Syrian town of Quneitra which was razed to the ground by the Israeli forces prior to their withdrawal from it. They also visited the recently completed Euphrates Dam.

President Assad gave a dinner in honour of the delegates to the Conference which was also attended by the top leaders of the country.

Another dinner was given by the speaker of the People's Assembly. The PLO also gave a lunch in honour of the delegates.

SOLIDARITY DAY WITH THE GUATEMALAN PEOPLE

The World Peace Council observed 17th June as International Day of Solidarity with the People of Guatemala.

In its call for the observance of the Day, the WPC urged that the varied activities organised by national peace committees should lay stress on the genocidal violence, the institutionalised terror and repression imposed on the Guatemalan people by the regime of President Romero Lucas Garcia. It emphasised the necessity of condemning the regime on a worldwide scale and castigating U.S. imperialism for the support it extends to it.

Ever since the U.S. intervention in that country in 1954, the successive regimes imposed on Guatemala by the ruling classes, the army and U.S. imperialism, have systematically practised a policy of genocide, terror, exploitation and discrimination. The net result of this policy have been the killing and disappearance of over 70,000 men, women and children.

WPC ELECTED TO UNESCO NGOs PERMANENT COMMITTEE

The 18th Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations with consultative status with UNESCO elected the World Peace Council to its 15-member permanent Committee and a rapporteur of that Committee.

The Conference which was attended by 75 NGOs met in Paris in mid-June.

International Conference against Arms Race Puts Accent on Joint Actions

Stockholm, capital of Sweden, is associated with the historical appeals of peace forces in the 50's and 70's as well as other anti-military activities in many parts of the world. It was therefore not merely by coincidence that it was chosen by the Swedish Peace Committee and the World Peace Council to be the venue of the International Conference against the arms race and for disarmament in Europe.

This meeting, held from 6 to 8 June was attended by representatives of 85 movements and organisations from 30 European countries, the USA and Canada, as well as from many international bodies and Swedish public organisations and circles. The Conference developed as a joint meeting of different national peace forces and newly emerged mass movements which have gained the support of millions of people in their struggle against the arms race and danger of nuclear conflagration.

Among these organisations and movements were: the World Disarmament Campaign from Great Britain; the Initiative Group of the Peace March-81 from Norway; "No to Nuclear Weapons" and "Women for Peace" from Scandinavian countries; "Stop the Neutron Bomb" from the Netherlands; American Friends Service Committee; the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy from the USA; and other organisations from many countries.

The conference can be described as unusual in that it proved that broad exchange of opinions among various peace and anti-military organisations is not only quite possible, but indeed greatly benefits the prospects for future mutually supportive actions in the cause of just peace.

The importance of that meeting was clearly indicated also in the almost unanimous view the participants in the Conference expressed: that public opinion in Europe is more and more becoming a decisive force in convincing governments to negotiate for disarmament and in stopping the deployment of new nuclear missiles in Europe. Many delegates, especially from the USA, gave evidence that the mass media often distorts the facts about public concern over the growing danger of nuclear war. It is necessary therefore to hold meetings which help to inform each organisation about the broad mass actions taking place almost everywhere in Europe against the deployment of the new US nuclear missiles, and for immediate negotiations to prevent the further nuclear arming of Europe.

The final communique at the Conference states: "In the face of this grave danger, broad mass movements have developed all over the world and particularly in Europe. More and more

people of different viewpoints, men, women and youth; members of political parties, scientific associations, trade unions, religious communities and churches, are joining the struggle. Mutual cooperation and exchange of opinions are growing. At the same time however, each group and movement maintains its own position and different forms of action, nationally and multilaterally". (Materials of the Stockholm Conference will be published in a special pamphlet by the Information Centre of the WPC.)

Many participants laid stress on the

necessity of organizing such broad dialogue between the peace movements of Eastern and Western European countries in the future, because of the role these movements can and should play in curbing the arms race on the continent. Concrete proposals for future cooperation were put forward. New joint actions were considered for Hiroshima and Nagasaki days (August 6 and 8), Anti-War Day (September 1), the UN World Disarmament Week (October 24-30) and also in connection with the Second UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1982.



A partial view of the opening session of the International Conference against the Arms Race and for Disarmament in Stockholm.



A view of the concert that was held at the close of the Conference.

U.S. Military Bases Threat to Peace and Independence

As the struggle against the U.S. nuclear arms build-up and war plans assumes new unprecedented dimensions, peace forces around the world are paying closer attention to U.S. military bases abroad and the role assigned them in these plans. A close look at the U.S. network of military bases abroad reveals the following facts:

The U.S. currently maintains some 300 elaborate land, air and naval bases as well as approximately 2,000 more military facilities around the world, manned by 502,000 troops, one-fourth of the country's armed forces. The network has been greatly expanded in the last three decades. While the U.S. had only three bases in the '20s (Guantánamo in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Panama Canal Zone), it had established a military presence in 68 countries by 1968. As of 1980 the number of countries with American bases was over 110.

Why the Bases?

Referring to a "new strategic document" prepared by the U.S. Administration, the U.S. daily, The New York Times, (November 13, 1980), openly spelled out the purpose of the U.S. military bases abroad.

According to the "Times", the document stated categorically that no region of the world is outside the reach of American interests and consequently the U.S. must be capable of using force alone on many occasions. This, the paper added, required, to a larger extent than before, "a system of overseas bases and rights of access to foreign bases in order to assist ground, air and naval forces in support of U.S. interests all over the world."

The pattern of bases encircles the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and threatens independent anti-imperialist countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and liberation movements.

Europe — the Advanced Base

Western Europe, for historical and strategic reasons, figures very high in the network of U.S. military bases. It is, above all, in this region of the world that the U.S. relies heavily on its policy of "positions of strength" and "massive retaliation" (a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union and other countries.)

Great Britain provides the U.S. with the most important strategic air base in Europe within what is known as the U.S. Forward Based System.

It is in English and Scottish bases that advanced U.S. bombers carrying nuclear missiles are stationed. These are supported by other bases in Spain and radar stations in other countries. At the same time Scottish harbours are being used by U.S. missile-carrying submarines as supply and operation



bases. According to various sources, almost 25,000 men of the U.S. armed forces are stationed in Britain.

Another important U.S. base of operations is the Federal Republic of Germany. Here, at least 220,000 U.S. troops, including crack units are deployed, and heavy war materials for nearly 11 U.S. army divisions in Europe are stored in sufficient quantity to cover the U.S. needs in the Mediterranean region as well. Further, most of the U.S. fighter planes are maintained in the FRG, as well as 5,000 U.S. nuclear warheads at least, out of a total of 8,000 in Europe. Moreover, a major part of the planned-for-deployment Pershing II and Cruise missiles are to be stationed in the FRG.

NATO's Southern Flank

The U.S. bases in NATO's southern Europe and the Mediterranean stretch over a wide area, and include such countries as the Azores (which have served the U.S. for decades as the most important intermediate station and

supply base for its sea and air-lift in the Mediterranean), Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Since the conclusion of the Egyptian-Israeli Treaties and the Camp David accords, military facilities acquired in Egypt and Israel have expanded the network. In addition, Egypt has opened the Suez Canal to U.S. warships to allow the U.S. 6th fleet, as well as other U.S. warships, to quickly enter the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Since the U.S. declared the Middle East and the Gulf region an "area of vital interest" for raw materials, totally denying sovereignty and self-determination to the countries situated there, it is easy to discern a U.S. pincer movement, militarily speaking, directed against the independent anti-imperialist states in the Near and Middle East, in Africa and Asia.

Pacific and Indian Ocean

U.S. bases in the region are located in Hawaii, Guam, Japan and South Korea. More recently additional bases have been established in Diego Garcia, Kenya, Somalia and Oman. A Fifth Fleet was also set up for operations in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf area.

Diego Garcia, which has been in the lime light recently, occupies a special position in the network of bases in this region. The most important base for naval operations in the Indian Ocean region, it has been extended and expanded to accommodate long-range operations of naval and air formations. It is the biggest depot for nuclear weapons in the region, and it also provides facilities for stationing 12,000 men of the Rapid Deployment Force. Equipment and material for an addition 70,000 men are being constructed there and on floating bases around it.

AUSTRALIANS AGAINST U.S. BASES

Representatives from a broad cross section of Australians gathered in Alice Springs recently to participate in a seminar and demonstration in support of the removal of all foreign military and naval bases in Australia.

"Ten Days for Peace" in Greece

The Greek annual "Ten Days for Peace" which were organised this year from 15 to 25 May, featured meetings, manifestations and cultural events all over the country which echoed the Greek people's strong opposition to the U.S. and NATO war plans.

Congress of Peace Forces

The high point of this nation-wide campaign was the Pan-Hellenic Congress of Peace Forces which took place from 22 to 24 May in Athens. Some 700 delegates, elected by local and regional committees participated in the Congress which met under the slogan "United in the Struggle to Remove Foreign Military Bases and Nuclear Weapons from Greece".

Foreign observers came from the peace movements of the U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, SWAPO (Namibia), Italy and the Palestine Liberation Organisation. The World Peace Council was represented by a delegation headed by President Romesh Chandra and included Secretary E. Kiranova (Bulgaria). Other international organisations present were the International Union of Students and the International Committee of Solidarity with Cyprus.

Representatives of some of Greece's major political parties addressed the Congress, reflecting the Greek public's concern over the growing nuclear arms build-up and the country's re-entry into NATO. They included the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), the Union of the Democratic Centre (EDIK), the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), the Party of Democratic Socialism (KODISO), the Centre Party, the United Democratic Left (EDA), and the Agrarian Party (AKE).

Topical Issues

Four main issues dominated the discussions at the Congress which worked in plenary sessions and commissions. They were the presence of foreign military bases in Greece; the new war danger, including the planned deployment of new U.S. nuclear missiles in Western Europe, the Cyprus problem and the situation in the Aegean Sea. The preparations for the planned International Conference of Intellectuals against nuclear war, to be held next year in Greece, were also discussed.

In a message to the Greek people, the Congress called for stepped up struggle against the nuclear military build-up, for the preservation of detente and the dismantling of foreign military bases in Greece.

Greece is in danger of entanglement in any future regional or world war resulting from a U.S. or NATO adventure in the Arab or other neighbouring countries, the message said.

To avert this danger, the message demanded that the Government stop



WPC President Romesh Chandra addressing the Conference



A partial view of the crowd that gathered for the closing cultural event of the Conference.

negotiations on U.S. and NATO bases in Greece and avoid entanglement in any future imperialist war adventure in the area. It also demanded the dismantlement of foreign military bases in Greece, non-deployment of new U.S. nuclear missiles in Europe, the withdrawal of Greece from NATO, and the simultaneous dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw pacts.

Peace March

At the close of the Congress, a peace march was organised against foreign military bases from Lagadas to Salonica. Over 50,000 people participated in the march which ended on Salonica's main

square with an impressive mass meeting and a concert. The main slogans of the march read: "We don't want Salonica to become a new Hiroshima!" and "Out with the bases of death from Greece!"

A day after the march a peace concert was held in the Kallithea Stadium.

The well-known Greek actress Melina Mercouri read to the assembled public the Congress Message to the Greek people and the Appeal of the World Parliament of Peoples for Peace. The renowned poet Iannis Ritsos read a recent poem of his dedicated to peace; and a rich programme of songs and music by prominent artists was presented.

NORTHERN CALOTTE PEACE DAYS

At the end of June this year the traditional Peace Days of the northern parts of the four countries Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Soviet Union were held for the seventh time with over 1,000 persons participating and representing active peace organizations in each of the four countries. The World Peace Council was represented by Secretary Mrs. K. Hannikainen (Finland).

The Finnish and Soviet delegations were on an exceptionally high level. The programme of the Peace Days included art exhibitions, concerts, excursions, group discussion of youth, women, environmentalists, trade unionists and cultural workers and a meeting with the Saami people. During the discussions special emphasis was laid on the various aspects of Calotte cooperation, but the gravity of the international situation dominated the work of the Peace Days. The proposal of Finnish President Urho Kekkonen for the creation of a nuclear weapon free Nordic Zone was viewed as more significant and pressing in the present international situation. The participants considered the recent statement of Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev to a Finnish Social Democratic party newspaper concerning the nuclear weapon Nordic free zone as a very positive development.

In their final communique the participants emphasised the necessity of continuing and intensifying the cooperation in all fields in the Calotte area and appealed to Nordic governments to take concrete measures to promote the Kekkonen proposal.

WPC CONDEMNS U.S. ARMS AID TO PAKISTAN

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Pakistan. It, in effect, constitutes yet another step in the massive arms build-up on the part of United States imperialism in the region. It will introduce a qualitatively new level of sophisticated weapons in the region which will threaten the independence and sovereignty of India and other countries, and endanger peace in Asia and the whole world.

The United States decision has to be viewed in the context of its existing massive arms build-up in the Indian Ocean, the strengthening of its nuclear base in Diego Garcia, and the Rapid Deployment Force in the Gulf. Its dangerous implications have been compounded by the enthusiastic support extended by the most aggressive members of the NATO alliance, including Great Britain, to the arming of Pakistan on this unprecedented scale. In his way attempt is made to turn Pakistan into a gendarme of that region and springboard for U.S. imperialism's aggressive and destabilizing actions in the neighbouring countries.

Another dangerous aspect of U.S. military aid to Pakistan is its link with the supply of

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The World Peace Council has urged the ruling junta in El Salvador to release recently abducted architect, Abdala Antonio, and architect Claudia Orozco. The latter was abducted together with five other people living in her house

- The World Peace Council has vehemently condemned the aggression committed in early June by South Africa's apartheid regime against the People's Republic of Angola. In that aggression South African aircraft made several incursions into Angolan territory and attacked roads, tunnels and bridges. South African troops attacked villages and reduced roads to ruin. Over 30 Angolans were killed and serious damage was caused to property.

- The NGO Sub-Committee on Racism, of which Mr. Romesh Chandra is President, is organising an International NGO Conference in Geneva in mid-September on the Indigenous Peoples and the land.

- The World Peace Council marked the fifth anniversary of Soweto massacre in South Africa on 16th June. In a statement issued on that occasion. It hailed the fighting people of South Africa pledging continued support for their struggle against the apartheid regime. It also called on all national peace movements to redouble their efforts aimed at "ensuring effective and comprehensive economic sanctions against the apartheid regime, strict implementation of the U.N. arms and oil embargo and the severance of all cultural and sporting links with racist South Africa".

The US was condemned for its collaboration with the apartheid regime and for its share of responsibility for the deaths of thousands of innocent South Africans and other peoples in neighbouring countries.

The statement also called for the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.

CALENDAR OF SOLIDARITY DAYS

International solidarity forms an important part of the work of the World Peace Council. The WPC Programme of action for 1981 includes an elaborate section on the organisation of solidarity actions with peoples struggling for peace, national independence and social progress and against imperialism, racial discrimination and oppression. The following is a calendar of solidarity days for the second half of 1981 as they appear in the WPC Programme of Action for this year:

JULY

- 15 Day of Solidarity with the People of Bolivia.
- 15-21 International Week of Solidarity with Cyprus.

AUGUST

- 6-13 Week of Action for the banning of Nuclear Arms and in Solidarity with the Habakushas.
- 9 International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa and Namibia.
- 26 Day of Namibia.

SEPTEMBER

- 1 World Peace Day
- 1 International Day of Solidarity with the People of the Libyan Jamahiriya.
- 2 National Day of Viet Nam.
- 4-11 Week of Solidarity with Chile.
- 12-18 Week of Solidarity with the Ethiopian Revolution.
- 23-30 International Week of Solidarity with the Struggle for the Independence of Puerto Rico.

OCTOBER

- 16 World Campaign for the Observance of World Food Day.
- 24-31 United Nations Disarmament Week
- 25 International Solidarity Day with the Syrian People.

NOVEMBER

- 16-23 International Week of Action against the Transnational Corporations (TNCs).
- 29 International Solidarity Day with the Palestinian People.

DECEMBER

- 7 International Day of Solidarity with the People of Bahrain.

Chinese arms to Pakistan. The collusion between the United States and China in making Pakistan an accomplice in their imperialist and expansionist designs no longer remains a covert operation. In fact, the declaration by the U.S. Secretary of State, General Haig, after his visit to Peking to supply lethal arms to China, lifting all past restrictions in this respect, is a clear avowal of the "close military relationship" being set up between the USA and China. The Washington-Peking axis will henceforth function in the open.

The recent visit of U.S. and Chinese leaders to Islamabad was meant to bolster up the military dictatorship in Pakistan, which has been assigned a key role in serving the aims of the U.S. imperialists and Chinese expansionists. The dangerous regional and global implications of U.S. military aid to Pakistan have to be seen in their totality. The World Peace Council calls on all peace-loving forces to mobilise worldwide actions against the diabolical move of the U.S. imperialists to give massive military aid to Pakistan, and expose its dangerous consequence for the peace in the region and the world as whole.

NEWS FROM NATIONAL PEACE COMMITTEES

AUSTRALIA

The Peace Centre of the Australian Peace Committee launched a national petition against U.S. military bases in Australia.

The petition will be presented to the Australian Federal Parliament and it is hoped that it will reflect the Australian public's opposition to U.S. bases in Australia. and in particular, the recent decision to allow landing rights to U.S. B-52 bombers.

(A Gallop Poll held in March, 1981 showed that 62 per cent of Australians are opposed to U.S. bombers carrying nuclear weapons to land in Australia.

A letter by the Peace Centre to organisations, trade unions and individuals, stressed the urgent need to mobilise Australian workers in opposition to the present bases and the threat of Australia becoming a front-line nuclear target in the event of a nuclear war.

DEMOCRATIC YEMEN

• In a statement issued on the occasion of the 9th May, the anniversary of the victory over Hitlerite fascism, the Yemeni Council for Peace and Solidarity called on peace forces in the world to redouble their efforts to preserve world peace and block the way before imperialist war preparations.

"Imperialism is today feverishly carrying on a nuclear arms build-up, setting up military bases in different parts of the world and massing its forces and fleets which have led to increasing international tension. It is also openly supporting fascist and dictatorial regimes and helping in imposing oppressive governments on many peoples. It is the duty of the peace forces to strengthen their unity and rebuff this dangerous policy", the statement said.

• A meeting of solidarity with the Afghanistan Revolution was held in Aden on the occasion of the Week of Solidarity with Afghanistan. In addition to a representative of the Yemeni Peace and Solidarity Council, the speakers included a representative of the PLO and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman. A cable sent by the meeting to the Afghan Peace Committee, condemned imperialist and reactionary conspiracies against the Afghani Revolution and expressed unre-

served support for the government of Afghanistan.

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The GDR Research Council issued a statement welcoming the initiative of Soviet scientists concerning the formation of an international committee of scientists on the dangers of nuclear war.

Addressed to the Soviet scientists, the statement said: "We share your deep concern over the dangerous threat of a world war. Our knowledge of the danger to the continued survival of mankind resulting from the stockpiling of ever more sophisticated means of mass destruction makes it imperative for us to work with all our energy and authority for ending the arms race."

GRENADA

A huge rally was organised on the occasion of Africa Liberation Day (May 24), which was addressed by the Prime Minister and leader of the New Jewel Movement, Mr. Maurice Bishop.

Africa Liberation Day is regarded in Grenada as an important occasion during which the whole population of the country expresses solidarity with the people of Africa. Since 1973, the New Jewel Movement has observed the Day.

NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand Council for World Peace has called on the government to withdraw its recognition of the Pol Pot clique and to recognise the legitimate government of Democratic Kampuchea, under the leadership of President Heng Samrin.

USSR

• A delegation of US peace organisations has visited the USSR at the invitation of the Soviet Peace Committee. A detailed exchange of views on topical questions of the struggle for peace and against the threat of war took place with the US guests. It was emphasised in these exchanges that the present aggravation of the international situation lends special importance to the new peace initiatives advanced by Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. He proposed, among other things, the reduction and limitation of strategic armaments and a moratorium on the stationing of new medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe by NATO and the USSR. The US peace supporters went on record in

favour of an early resumption of the Soviet-American talks with the object of strategic arms limitation.

William Fritzmeier, the head of the delegation, said that while in the Soviet Union his delegation could see for themselves the sincere desire of Soviet people for a stronger universal peace.

• A three-day seminar of Soviet and Finnish peace supporters took place recently in Moscow. The seminar was sponsored by the Soviet Peace Committee and dealt with the problems of disarmament and detente.

The Finnish delegation included parliamentarians and representatives of political parties and journalists. Within the framework of the seminar the Finnish delegation visited international relations research institutes and met with prominent Soviet scientists and public figures. During the talk in the Soviet Peace Committee, the representatives of peace supporters of the two countries stressed the necessity of invigorating the public effort to avert the threat of thermonuclear war, to safeguard and deepen detente.

At a press conference in Moscow the Finnish delegation said that many Finns were concerned about the growing threat of war. Their concern was shared by broad circles in other Nordic countries.

• A delegation of the Swedish Peace Council spent some time in the USSR at the invitation of the Soviet Peace Committee. Of eleven organisations of Swedish peace supporters which operate under the aegis of the Council, four were represented in the delegation, which included H. Backman - the Swedish Society of Friends (Quakers), the head of the delegation; Ch. Bergstadt, Secretary of the Swedish Peace Committee; P. Bolding - the Swedish Section of World Federalists, Professor of International Law of Lund University; and L. Larsson - the Swedish Society of Peace and Conciliation.

The Soviet and Swedish peace supporters exchanged views on pressing problems of the struggle to improve the international situation and strengthen in particular European security. They emphasised the necessity to continue the talks on the limitation and reduction of strategic arms and emphasised the need for intensifying the activities of peace forces aiming at deepening detente, removing the threat of war and developing mutual understanding between the peoples.

All the members of the Swedish delegation came out in active support of the idea to turn Europe, and particularly Northern Europe, into a nuclear-free zone. They stressed that the Soviet Union and Finland had tabled comparable proposals, and there was a real opportunity of their implementation. The members of the delegation also regarded as timely the idea of convening the All-European Conference on Military Detente and Disarmament, and came out in favour of further strengthening cooperation between the peace forces in Europe.