

Global South Academic Forum Report Compilation

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International Communication Research Institute, East China Normal University

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Preface

History Has Not Ended

- Speaker: Vijay Prashad

- Year: 2023

History has not ended. At the United Nations COP-26 climate meeting in November 2021, while awaiting a COVID-19 test at Glasgow Airport, I encountered executives from a Texas oil services company. One inquired about my views on the conference and my purpose there. When I explained my reporting on Mozambique's Cabo Delgado conflict—where French energy company Total and American ExxonMobil controlled offshore gas projects while local communities received no benefits—their expressions turned concerned. One responded: "I had not heard about any of this. What you say is true, but nobody cares." This encounter crystallized three realities: the unavailability of information about such conflicts, the immoral prioritization of corporate profits over local populations, and the indifference of powerful nations.

The media's power to define global events remains unquestionable, with certain countries' outlets establishing what becomes historical record. The Ukraine conflict has accelerated global shifts, revealed Western fragility while highlighted China's strength and the Global South's strategic non-alignment. Western dominance has eroded across multiple vectors—finance, resources, science, and technology—yet they retain overwhelming control in two domains: weapons systems and information. This analysis examines Samir Amin's five controls of neocolonialism to contextualize these shifts, focusing particularly on information control and its implications for knowledge producers.

The Five Controls of the Neo-Colonial International Structure

Emerging during decolonization, the neocolonial structure preserved Western advantages gained through colonialism. Where colonial powers directly owned resources, post-independence arrangements established Western *control* through five mechanisms:

Control over finance operated through Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and World Bank), supplemented by mechanisms like SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) and the London/Paris Clubs. This leveraged debt to maintain authority over newly independent states. The rise of Global South locomotives like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) has since challenged this monopoly, creating alternative financial channels.

Control over resources allowed Western corporations to dictate extraction terms while nominally recognizing local ownership. The 1974 proposal for a New International Economic Order was suppressed, but Southern-led resource sovereignty initiatives now erode Western dominance.

Control over science and technology intensified when Western entities redefined intellectual property around final products rather than processes. Unanticipated technological advances in the Global South—spearheaded by China—prompted U.S. trade wars, revealing Western anxiety over diminishing tech hegemony.

While the first three controls have weakened, Western dominance persists in weapons systems and information. Military spending illustrates this asymmetry: global expenditures reach \$2.868 trillion, with Western nations accounting for \$2 trillion. The U.S. maintains unparalleled annihilation capabilities despite other nations' advancements.

Control over information remains near-absolute through Western infrastructure dominance (submarine cables, satellites) and media monopolies established during colonialism.

The West's Domination of Information and Its Critique

Information control manifests through hardware and software dominance. Submarine cables—436 lines spanning 1.3 million kilometers—carry 95% of global data flows. Western corporations (Alcatel, SubCom) and U.S.-allied tech giants (Meta, Google) dominate this infrastructure, owning or controlling critical networks. Satellite distribution shows similar imbalance: of 4,550 orbital satellites, 2,804 (62%) are U.S.-owned, while SpaceX alone operates three times more than China's total.

This hardware monopoly enables shadow censorship—throttling or blocking information flows without public scrutiny. Projects like SpaceX's StarLink network deepen this control, creating African connectivity dependencies. Meanwhile, Western media's ideological monopoly persists through ownership centralization, corporate advertising influence, and state-aligned "experts." The Ukraine coverage exemplifies this, excluding non-Western perspectives while amplifying NATO narratives.

Global South resistance to information control began early. When imprisoned in 1934, India's Nehru discovered Reuters coordinated pro-British coverage with colonial authorities. Post-WWII decolonization efforts prioritized media sovereignty through UNESCO, culminating in the 1953 study exposing Western agencies'

domination of global news. Subsequent initiatives included the 1958 Quito conference establishing CIESPAL (International Centre of Advanced Communication Studies for Latin America), the 1961 Bangkok meeting creating the Organisation of Asian News Agencies, and the 1963 Tunis conference founding the Union of African News Agencies.

The 1973 Non-Aligned Movement summit in Algiers proposed reorganizing colonial-era communication channels, revising exploitative cable rates, establishing collective satellite ownership, and increasing South-South knowledge exchange. These principles informed the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) proposal. UNESCO's 1980 MacBride Report (*Many Voices, One World*) documented Western media cartels' distortion of Global South realities—exemplified when Indian audiences perceived 1973 OPEC actions through Western lenses.

Western backlash was immediate. The U.S. and U.K. withdrew from UNESCO in 1984, citing objections to NWICO and the New International Economic Order. Simultaneously, media privatization birthed conglomerates like CNN and News Corporation, smothering alternative narratives. Subsequent declarations—Windhoek (1991), Alma Ata (1993), Santiago (1994), Sana'a (1996)—faded against WTO-enforced privatization. Western media reframed privatization as "press freedom" while dismissing public media as authoritarian, cementing entertainment-news hybrids that erode informational literacy.

Our Three Challenges

Confronting Western information control requires coordinated strategies across three domains:

The Battle of Information demands rebuilding transnational news-sharing networks. The 1976 Non-Aligned News Pool—though inoperative—offers a template for government-supported collaboration. Contemporary initiatives like Peoples Dispatch (distributing content in English/Spanish) demonstrate how aligned media projects can create alternative wires.

The Battle of Ideas necessitates syndicating counter-narratives through existing media. With corporate outlets retreating from international coverage, services like Globetrotter (syndicated in eight languages to 500+ publications) prove Southern perspectives can bypass Western gatekeepers. This builds independent analytical frameworks essential for mutual understanding.

The Battle of Emotions must spotlight grassroots solutions to human dilemmas. Corporate media's futility narratives disempower communities; we must highlight ordinary people's transformative actions to restore historical agency.

The Glasgow oil executives' indifference reflects systemic erasure, but three decades of journalistic work confirm alternatives exist. When corporate media ignored Mozambique's gas conflict, Globetrotter's syndication placed it in hundreds of publications worldwide. Our media landscape won't be built by others—we must construct it ourselves.

New Cold War, Peace, and Development: Contemporary Implications of the Lippmann-Kennan Debate

• Speaker: Lu Xinyu

• Year: 2024

The final role is actually quite challenging, as everyone is quite hungry by now, so I will strive to wrap up my closing remarks as quickly as possible. However, since we held an internal discussion on Northeast Asia last night with colleagues from South Korea, Japan, and the Ryukyu Islands, I mentioned that I could use this closing opportunity to address issues of mutual concern.

Two keywords have defined our forum these past two days: peace and development. One central theme we explored was: Where does the threat to peace stem from in today's world dominated by hegemony? Is there a way to resolve this? The second question concerns development: How can we secure development for the Global South while striving for peace?

Under the shadow of this so-called new Cold War, during last year's Global South International Forum, we placed the term "new Cold War" in quotation marks, expressing our hope that it would not become a genuine new Cold War. Today, however, those quotation marks are no longer necessary, as a de facto new Cold War has already emerged.

This compels us to address: What was the old Cold War, and what is the new one? If we briefly revisit history, there is a well-known story involving George Kennan, the architect of the Cold War. His 1946 long telegram and his famous essay "The Sources of Soviet Conduct"—considered the origin of the Cold War—remain pivotal. We revisit this discourse today because it laid two historical foundations for the Russia-Ukraine war: first, the "End of History" thesis—a declaration of Cold War victory through "decommunization" following the collapse of the Soviet bloc; second, the post-Cold War "Clash of Civilizations" theory and new balance-of-power doctrine, which justified American military hegemony. These two ideologies, emerging in succession, have shaped today's global landscape and established the ideological high ground for Western knowledge production and mainstream media.

There is a well-known anecdote involving Mr. X—George Kennan—who faced a fierce rebuttal from the prominent journalist Walter Lippmann. Lippmann argued that the Cold War was a peculiar phenomenon: Britain and the United States had been allies in the war against fascism, so how could they become enemies after victory? This development itself was perplexing, prompting Lippmann to advocate

for the continuation of the post-war Anglo-Soviet alliance. Moreover, he predicted a series of consequences should a Cold War erupt—all in response to Mr. X's lengthy telegram and his famous extended article. This remains a classic case study in international politics. Strangely, today few revisit this debate—neither in international politics nor in communication studies. In Western Cold War historiography, the Soviet Union's collapse is widely hailed as a victory for the prophet Kennan, though it was Fukuyama who declared triumph. Lippmann's warnings have long been forgotten or dismissed as failed prophecies.

The United States emerged from the Great Depression of the 1930s through World War II. By 1944, its industrial output had already doubled that of the Axis powers. By 1945, it was three times that of the Soviet Union and five times that of Britain, accounting for half of the world's industrial output and three-quarters of its gold reserves. At the war's end, its GDP reached 50% of the global total. Thus, industrial capacity proved decisive in determining Cold War victory—especially when Truman wielded the military-industrial complex's latest achievement: the atomic bomb. This requires our renewed understanding. Yet the question remains: Why did Lippmann's "mantra" persist throughout the Trump era, even as the United States continued projecting its "national potential" and "manifest power" (especially military-industrial capabilities) into the Middle East and former Soviet regions after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc?

Let us revisit the Long Telegram: it reduced the causes of the outbreak of imperialist war to the Russian Revolution and further reduced the Russian Revolution to Russia's internal and national issues. Thus, the Soviet Union became the scapegoat for the world war. Just as we hear today: Americans perceive the United States as the true victor over fascism in World War II. This paves the way for the following diagnosis: de-communization alone cannot dismantle Moscow's so-called dictatorship; the overlay of communism and ethnicity constitutes Russia's original sin. This explains why, in the current Russia-Ukraine war, this logic targeting the Stalinist era remains the primary narrative used by the U.S., NATO, and Western media to describe Russia's "dictatorship." — post-decommunization Russia remains the West's adversary. Transforming the fascist crisis born of European capitalism into an "Orientalist problem" is Mr. X's contribution. This presents an irreconcilable dilemma for today's neo-Kennanists advocating "containment"—especially amid the global resurgence of right-wing populism and fascism within the U.S. and West—and explains why "offensive realism" theory emerged to rescue the narrative.

Thus, when the liberal/authoritarian dichotomy—crafted by the victors and architects of the Cold War—became the dominant narrative of world history, the history of World War II, ignited by the Great Depression in the United States, ceased

to be included in the ledger of 20th-century human history. The profound crisis of the global capitalist economic system triggered by the Great Depression not only provided fertile ground for the rise of German and Japanese fascism but also underpinned the Soviet Union's forced industrialization, rural collectivization, and political purges of the 1930s. The purges were fundamentally aimed at ensuring forced industrialization could be implemented within the Party. When the political purges within the Soviet Party were condemned as irrational personal dictatorship, they obscured the catastrophic destruction wrought by the global capitalist crisis upon the Soviet Union's industrialization path—which relied on exporting agricultural products to acquire technology and capital. This crisis also determined the brutal stakes for the very survival of the entire Soviet Union. In this sense, the uneven development of the Soviet Union's forcibly pursued industrialization path was a mirror image of the crisis of uneven development within American capitalism. The so-called authoritarianism that emerged from this foundation represented the interests inherent in the brutal process of capitalist industrialization.

It is precisely within these discourses that a series of binary oppositions—democracy versus authoritarianism, freedom versus tyranny, state versus society, the West versus China, the Global South versus the Global North—form the historical projection of today's realpolitik, as well as the projection of the Cold War's dividing lines. These remain concealed in the very depths of today's "globalization" and "modernization."

Today, the world remains shackled by this binary framework of oppositions. This very framework underpins the intellectual and ideological reproduction of what is termed the "new Cold War"—its agenda being to reclaim lost ground from the perspective of Western-centrism and Cold War victors, while globally exorcising the specter of socialism. Only this time, its target is China.

The success of American industrialization inevitably came at the cost of greater cruelty. In fact, the two world wars were the product of old and new imperialism and colonialism vying for industrial raw materials and markets worldwide. They embodied the brutal process of global industrialization and served as the driving force behind large-scale wars in human history. The post-WWII Cold War and containment of the Soviet Union by the United States constituted unilateral global political sanctions. We have also discussed many issues related to sanctions this time.

Through extreme external pressure and material embargoes, sanctioned nations are forced into internal political tension, escalation, and contraction (inevitably manifesting as "centralization"), while economically plunging into prolonged

shortages spanning production to consumption. The so-called "shortage economics" specifically refers to the economic phenomena within the socialist bloc of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the Cold War. In fact, planned economies themselves represent wartime economic approaches designed to address shortages and sanctions. They are not inherently exclusive to socialism; it is simply that the socialist nations emerging from World War I and World War II found themselves subjected to military intervention and sanctions.

As Lenin pointed out, so-called "state capitalism" was the planned economy adopted by capitalist nations during World War I to address wartime crises, while Roosevelt's New Deal in the United States was also a form of state capitalism managing crisis conditions. Criticism of the Soviet planned economy was fundamentally an attack on the Soviet path to industrialization. In Mr. X's view, non-military embargoes and ideological containment would prove more effective.

However, the strategy and rhetoric of Cold Warriors involved creating economic shortages through sanctions and embargoes, then attributing these shortages to inherent flaws within the socialist system or any totalitarian regime itself—rather than as a chain reaction of external containment. This framing was used to mobilize and support internal resistance, ultimately driving the political system of the sanctioned nation toward disintegration or regime change. The so-called Cold War essentially transformed external sanctions and embargoes into forces for internal disintegration. Its militarization was an inevitable logical consequence of its dualistic logic. The mutual transformation between hot war and cold war was dictated by their objectives. The Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the military coups orchestrated by the United States worldwide all constitute internal components of the Cold War. Thus, the dissolution of the Soviet Union represented both the Cold War's greatest achievement and its heaviest cost—today's political polarization in the United States is its boomerang effect, and the massive resurgence of McCarthyism is an inevitable consequence. The Russia-Ukraine, Palestine-Israel, and Israel-Lebanon conflicts serve as dress rehearsals for a new Cold War and a potential Third World War.

In the post-Soviet world, socialist nations like Cuba and North Korea remain trapped within the old Cold War containment framework. China, however, broke free from Cold War containment and blockade through Mao Zedong's initiative to establish diplomatic relations with the United States, followed by Deng Xiaoping's leadership in reform and opening up. Yet today, China faces renewed challenges from a new Cold War and renewed containment. The logic of the old and new Cold Wars remains unchanged, as does the logic governing the transition between Cold and Hot Wars.

The alliance between nationalism and socialism in the 20th century was shattered by the West's Cold War victory, giving rise to today's kaleidoscopic political landscape where nationalism converges with diverse right-wing conservatism, fundamentalism, racism, and populist ideologies. Today, under the banner of nationalism, a vast global assembly of right-wing forces has gathered, defined by boundaries of race, ethnicity, and civilization. This phenomenon signifies nothing less than the complete failure—from discourse to practice—of the neoliberal universalist narrative of democracy, freedom, and the market championed by the victors of the Cold War. Why, then, has Mearsheimer abandoned this rhetoric? His so-called "offensive realism" is merely a dagger revealed when the map is unfolded—a naked military endorsement of American hegemony within the current world order. In this sense, Mearsheimer's "offensive realism" is nothing more than the latest iteration of the "End of History" thesis—an imperialist version.

W. Lippmann, a key debater in the era, keenly recognized: Mr. X's document was a major event, the most important text of the Truman Doctrine foreign policy. Thus, in 1947, Lippmann compiled his columns targeting Mr. X and the Truman Doctrine into another book, *The Cold War: A Study of American Foreign Policy*. The Chinese edition was released in 1959. Lippmann's perspectives garnered Mao Zedong's close attention and were frequently reprinted in publications such as the *People's Daily*, *Reference News*, and *Xinhua News Agency*.

Lippmann and Kennan shared the same political stance, but he criticized the Truman Doctrine's policy as misguided because it ultimately harmed Europe and the United States itself. X's containment strategy was fundamentally unworkable because it would inevitably lead to the United States abusing its power. Containment was an anti-world-market action; to effectively implement containment policy meant abandoning the principles of supply and demand in the world market, confronting the Soviet Union according to the Soviet model, and ultimately resulting in the Sovietization of the United States.

Under the principle of containment, the United States would inevitably be compelled to engage in global intervention. It would require the deployment of American economic, political, and ultimately military power at every stage in Europe and Asia, inevitably leading to American interference in the internal affairs of nations worldwide. This constitutes the fundamental political framework between the United States and the Third World. Since America alone lacks sufficient strength to confront the Soviet Union, the countervailing forces Mr. X requires must be drawn from the Chinese, Afghans, Iranians, Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Greeks, Italians, and anti-Soviet Poles, Czechoslovaks, Bulgarians, Yugoslavs, and others. Implementing this policy could only be achieved by recruiting, subsidizing, and

supporting a motley coalition of satellite states, mercenaries, vassals, and puppets. This meant America would need to continuously pour money into the effort, signifying perpetual interference in the domestic affairs of nations across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The new united front was nothing more than "a pot of porridge boiling with internal strife"—a famously apt metaphor coined by Lippmann.

The U.S. hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 after two decades of war was a real-world manifestation of Lippmann's prophecy.

Lippmann observed that wherever American influence extended, civil wars erupted along ethnic fault lines—from Cold War legacies like the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Taiwan issue, to post-Cold War conflicts in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria; from the wave of nationalism following the Soviet Union's collapse to today's Russia-Ukraine war. Such patterns are all too common. Yet within the framework of the "Clash of Civilizations," civil wars ignited by American intervention are framed solely as "ethnic conflicts" or "nationalist issues." This narrative allows the United States to be transformed into a "savior" through Huntington's ideological camouflage, while Third World "nationalism" becomes the scapegoat for imperialism.

In reality, it was precisely the postwar U.S. policy of "anti-market" containment and massive capital injections that enabled postwar Europe, the former Asian Tigers, and the "democratic" frontiers of Japan and South Korea to leverage Cold War dividends. They broke through the constraints of primitive capitalist accumulation to achieve development—at the cost of becoming vassal states and accepting neocolonial political status. Without the military demand and dollar liquidity generated by the Korean War, the capitalist takeoff of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in the 1970s would not have occurred. Following the Korean Armistice, various forms of military and economic aid, along with expenditures on numerous overseas military bases worldwide, became channels for the United States to provide liquidity. In trade, the U.S. adopted asymmetric cooperation to attract allies and address dollar shortages—fully opening its market while permitting allies to impose trade protectionism and restrict U.S. imports. The dollar's status as a key currency and America's role as primary liquidity provider formed the institutional foundation for winning the Cold War and maintaining hegemony. We've thoroughly discussed this issue over the past two days. Thus, there was no such thing as a self-sustaining capitalist market.

The second issue in the Lippmann debate concerns European security. Concentrating power and resources on the Soviet periphery would make Europe the primary battleground for World War III.

Today's Soviet Union has indeed "disintegrated" into fifteen nations, as Mr. X envisioned. Yet Russia, fighting a last-ditch "war of survival," is faithfully executing Lippmann's "mantra" from half a century ago: When Europe is forced to confront the threat of war, it means:

"Their cities and fields will become bases and bridgeheads in a total war, and this total war will merge with a universal civil war, becoming an extremely brutal and indecisive conflict."

Is this describing today's Russia-Ukraine war? Thus, in his view, it was the British and Americans who could not accept the division of the European continent along the Yalta line, necessitating a diplomatic campaign to prevent Russia from expanding and consolidating its sphere of influence. Therefore, as long as the Red Army did not withdraw from Europe, Soviet power could not retreat. The only solution, he argued, was for both the US and the USSR to withdraw their forces. Thus, Lippmann's final, incisive critique of the Truman Doctrine was that it would lead to the destruction of the United Nations. Containment inevitably forced all nations to choose sides, creating a crisis for the UN. Such an approach was sealing the UN's fate.

In fact, while these Western strategists racked their brains to force the Soviet Union out of Europe and neutralize Germany, Stalin was simultaneously making his final peace overtures through media appeals. In May 1948, in his reply to Wallace's open letter, he still called upon the world to respond to Wallace's proposals: "Universal reduction of armaments and prohibition of atomic weapons; conclusion of peace treaties with Germany and Japan, withdrawal of troops from these two countries; withdrawal of weapons from China and Korea; conclusion of peace treaties with Germany and Japan, withdrawal of troops from these two countries; Withdrawal of troops from China and Korea; respect for the sovereignty of all nations and non-interference in their internal affairs; prohibition of establishing military bases in UN member states; vigorous development of international trade and elimination of all discrimination; assistance and economic recovery for nations devastated by war within the UN framework; and defense of democracy and safeguarding of civil rights worldwide."

This was the voice of America at the time, and also the voice of Stalin. However, after the "Long Telegram" of 1947, the Western camp led by the United States could no longer "coexist peacefully" with the Soviet Union. It was precisely the Cold War

containment policy led by the United States after World War II that propelled America down a path of no return: borrowing money from foreign nations through the issuance of government bonds while simultaneously providing liquidity to its allies, all while avoiding structural adjustments despite massive current account deficits. This resulted in enormous national debt, economic hollowing-out under financial liberalization, and reduced exports due to offshore production.

Thus, Trump's "anti-establishment" agenda aims to thoroughly settle these Cold War legacies. He demands repayment for all the "so-called costs" the U.S. has borne in military and trade. He deems it unreasonable for the U.S. to shoulder 75% of NATO defense costs, insists Japan and South Korea cover the expenses of U.S. military bases, withdraws from the TPP, renegotiates NAFTA, and wages simultaneous trade wars with multiple nations. This stems from his belief that these free trade agreements and commercial relationships perpetuate the asymmetrical cooperation of the Cold War era—allowing other countries to export freely to the U.S. while imposing various trade barriers on American exports. In short, Trump does not seek to abandon U.S. global leadership but to rebuild the American economic structure undermined during the Cold War era to absorb allies.

The collapse of the Soviet Union signaled the end of Cold War dividends. The rebirth of historical capitalism relied on World War II, while the post-war capitalist boom depended on state-capitalist forms implemented to compete with Soviet socialism: America's New Deal and Europe's Marshall Plan. When the logic of American capitalism no longer found refuge in "expansionism" and debts began demanding repayment, the rise of Trump's "America First" and right-wing populism became the backlash effect of the international order shaped by American imperial liberalism's universal values. To counter this backlash, we witness high-stakes gambles like the Russia-Ukraine war—the Cold War logic underlying today's global landscape.

Today, two dominant narratives primarily shape the interpretation of the world system: the so-called "democratic peace theory" and the "clash of civilizations" theory. Together, they form a complementary theoretical framework for the "new Cold War." Huntington's so-called "clash of civilizations" is merely a scapegoat for the failures of American interventionism, describing the same reality. He used it to mask the fact that during the Cold War in the Middle East, the American empire suppressed weaker nation-states and fostered religious fundamentalist forces in its quest to dominate the Soviet Union. This forced human bombs and nuclear weapons to become the tools for weaker nations to assert and defend their sovereignty today. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict reaffirms rather than negates the significance

of sovereignty in contemporary geopolitics. The crux lies in how we articulate the relationship between ethnicity, race, and sovereignty in today's world.

Thus, when the socialist system ceases to be a viable option—that is, when the boundaries of race and culture are not broken down and a class-based foundation for national politics is not established—the resistance forces of marginalized and disadvantaged nations can only be channeled toward religious extremism and racism. The socialist movements of the 20th century, forging their path through fire and steel, never pursued ethnic isolation in their national theories and practices. Instead, they sought ethnic integration, equality among nations, and unity built upon this foundation—the only path capable of confronting both old and new imperialism and colonialism. This path demands rebirth from the ashes of defeat. Without socialism, the independence movements of weak nations in the imperialist era cannot address the challenges of both old and new colonialism.

Thus, what we observe today in the Global South essentially mirrors the "three rural issues" within the new world system, where the Global South and North represent the global urban-rural relationship. The Communist Manifesto outlined the historical logic by which the bourgeoisie subjugated the countryside to the city, subordinated peasant nations to bourgeois nations, and subjected the East to the West—a process that unfolded as the expansion of Anglo-American imperialist global hegemony since the 19th century.

The extent to which 21st-century socialist development theory, along with our development communication studies and practices, can transcend this logic will determine the shared destiny of Global South nations, including China. Peace is the prerequisite for development; peace and development are the themes of the 21st century and also the theme of our Global South Academic Forum. Next year marks the 70th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, and we hope our forum can contribute meaningfully to commemorating this milestone.

This concludes our forum for today. We extend our gratitude to all participants for their insightful contributions and to all volunteers for their dedication to this conference. Thank you all!

Part I: The New Order of Information and Communication in the 21st Century

1.1 The Contestation over a New Information and Communication Order in the Global South

1.1.1 A New World Communication Order Beyond the Cold War

• Speaker: Lu Xinyu

• Year: 2023

A New World Communication Order Beyond the Cold War. In fact, from yesterday to today, we've discussed extensively the Non-Aligned Movement and the New International Economic Order. I'd like to revisit the New International Economic Order, the Non-Aligned Movement of the 1970s, and the New World Information and Communication Order. Roy also highlighted this topic yesterday.

Let us briefly recall the background.

It emerged from the 1970s oil crisis as a proposal by Non-Aligned Nations for a new international economic order. The diplomatic triumph of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was also a material victory, making people realize that the economic development goals of the Global South are inseparable from information dissemination and culture. To transform the old order of so-called free flow of information in the Global North, the Non-Aligned Movement advocated for a new world information and communication order, gaining support from the Soviet Union at the time. A key historical milestone occurred in 1973 when the Fourth NAM Summit adopted the Algiers Declaration. This marked the first substantive discussion of mass communication issues, asserting that imperialist activities extended beyond economic and political spheres into cultural and social domains. It called for unified action among NAM nations in the field of mass communication.

Furthermore, at the 1976 Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Movement countries in New Delhi, India, the New Delhi Declaration on the Decolonization of Information was adopted. This declaration rejected the liberal media theories promoted by Western nations, arguing that the free flow of information was a one-way flow reflecting imperialist monopolization. It also highlighted the severe imbalances existing in global information circulation. The concentration and monopolization of information expression replicated the colonial-era relationship of dependency on dominant powers. Thus, non-aligned nations, as victims of this

status quo, asserted the concept of information rights. However, they also recognized that realizing these rights required sufficient material foundations and guarantees.

Additionally, in 1977, the Non-Aligned Movement established the International Council for Communication Studies within UNESCO to narrow the communication gap among developing nations and achieve more balanced global information dissemination. This marked a significant breakthrough achieved at the UNESCO level in 1977.

This movement actually failed in the 1980s, with a crucial backdrop being the Western nations' recovery from the oil crisis. With the rise of Reagan and Thatcher, who began implementing neoliberal policies, a global Northern offensive against the new world information and communication order was launched. Declarations emerged, such as those issued by the World Free Press Committee, asserting that UNESCO's decision regarding the aforementioned declaration would lead to increased government control over press freedom, thus constituting an anti-liberal declaration. Most significantly, the United States and the United Kingdom withdrew from UNESCO in 1983 and 1985 respectively. UNESCO began to retreat. Of course, we also know that the United States retreated a second time, withdrawing again from UNESCO in 2003 because the organization accepted Palestine as a member state in 2017. So we can see a simple historical narrative: neoliberalism effectively defeated the political vision and efforts of the 1970s Non-Aligned Movement to promote a new world information order across North-South and East-West blocs. It failed on this front.

Following this failure, both left-wing and right-wing critiques emerged. Right-wing criticism argued it harmed global press freedom by shielding authoritarian regimes, while Western media engaged in negative reporting and smear campaigns. Another critique highlighted that the movement solely condemned American imperialism without addressing Soviet involvement, as it enjoyed backing from the Soviet Union. Thus, UNESCO was politicized, seen as a communist assault on press freedom. Another critique was that the leftist scholars involved prioritized top-down state policy perspectives over grassroots participation. Furthermore, as a paradigm in international communication, it was constrained by a nation-state perspective between countries, neglecting class analysis within nations—a criticism from the left.

In truth, the theoretical foundation behind the New World Information and Communication Order aligns with the familiar concepts of cultural imperialism and media imperialism. This framework is widely regarded as having failed in the era of

globalization. In this age, audiences possess the capacity for counter-production against media content. Consequently, much cultural research has shifted its focus toward examining how such counter-production occurs. It is thus argued that unidirectional information dissemination has been superseded by more complex forms of communication.

The simplest retrospective. In today's landscape, is it possible to rebuild a 21st-century Non-Aligned Movement and a new world information and communication order? The core issue remains: the inequality and injustice in global communication caused by neoliberal globalization. With the widening wealth gap, North-South polarization, and the eruption of political crises within developed capitalist nations like Europe and the United States, these problems have not improved but have grown increasingly severe. In this sense, the historical mission of the 1970s Non-Aligned Movement remains unfulfilled and unfinished.

We witnessed the wave of globalization accelerated by the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This wave of globalization after the 1980s was reversed by China's rise, and following the U.S.-China trade war, America began its own deglobalization. Thus, we say that only when the tide recedes can we see the seabed. Or rather, only when the tide goes out can we see those running naked. It is only under such circumstances that we discover the underlying logic of the so-called rules-based world order is new imperialism and colonialism. In this sense, our opposition to imperialism and colonialism remains the foundational consensus driving the new Non-Aligned Movement to establish a new world information dissemination order in the 21st century. Thus, I present this question for discussion today: Is it still possible to rebuild the foundational consensus for a new 21st-century world information dissemination order based on renewed anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism? We leave this as an open question.

I believe that among the tasks and challenges we need to rebuild, one is the issue of academic knowledge production. Can the united front of intellectuals from the Global South be achieved? This is also a central theme of our conference today. We have repeatedly heard, particularly from Brazil's Invincible Peasants Movement, the emphasis placed on Gramsci's thought. The connection between the integration of intellectuals with society and peasant movements, as discussed in the "Speech at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" we heard on the first day, and the integration of socialism with rural movements, represents a crucial front for establishing an exchange system for knowledge production among intellectuals in the Global South—or, in other words, for building an interconnected system. In media practice, can South-South media collaboration and information exchange enable us to see each other directly—without relying on the media machinery or monopolistic structures

of developed capitalist nations in Europe and America—to achieve mutual learning among civilizations? This is the question at the level of media practice.

I believe another crucial issue, one we discussed repeatedly yesterday, is media sovereignty. This question unfolds across multiple dimensions. First, do nation-states possess the right to develop their own national media industrial systems? Behind such systems lies industrial development. Consider China's social media platforms—as Professor Jin mentioned, the breakthrough of our Observer Network. But this breakthrough was predicated on the state's investment in telecommunications infrastructure during its industrialization process. For instance, China's "Village-to-Village Connectivity" initiatives—ensuring access to engineering, television, telecommunications, railways, and highways—laid the groundwork for Professor Jin's breakthrough. Thus, industrialization is a prerequisite for national media industrial development. Telecommunications infrastructure relies on the accumulated achievements of a nation's industrialization.

Another issue is media sanctions. Today we witness transnational social media platforms imposing sanctions on information from certain nation-states. This constitutes a form of sovereign sanction. Thus, when social media platforms impose media sanctions on a sovereign nation, it essentially replicates the political sanctions of global hegemony. This raises the question of media sovereignty. How we address unilateral sanctions is also a matter of discussing media sovereignty.

Moreover, the success of social media platforms stems not from capitalists, but from the labor and contributions of countless media users. Just as the world is created by workers, so too are media platforms. The question is: How should the ownership of these labor-created achievements serve the people? How can their benefits be shared by all? This is the crux of the matter. Thus, the key lies in how we advance the democratization of social media platforms, particularly the major ones.

At yesterday's Media Sovereignty Forum, the legitimacy of state media like CGTN was discussed. Given China's size and its widely recognized importance to global development today, acknowledging its significance naturally requires understanding where China's voice is expressed. How does China view the world? How does China see itself? If not through state media, then through whom should these perspectives be expressed? The issue, therefore, is not merely that CGTN is state media. The question lies on another level: as state media and as a state-owned party newspaper, has it genuinely followed the mass line? Has it followed the mass line domestically in China? Has it followed the mass line globally? The critical question is whether it has overcome its own formalism and bureaucracy. It is not about its state ownership. In a process where China is surrounded and targeted by

global capitalism, it is entirely appropriate for state media to fight for the defense of national sovereignty. The real issue lies in how we understand the role of China's state media—its role in domestic social and political governance, and its role in international communication.

Therefore, what we hope to explore here is the possibility of a new Non-Aligned Movement. I believe Professor Wang Hui also discussed this potential today. How can we reconstruct a multi-tiered system of connections within the framework of a new Non-Aligned Movement? This system should encompass international organizations like UNESCO, but breaking through solely at the UNESCO level is insufficient—that approach failed in the 1970s. We must instead build more extensively upon sovereign nations, civil society, political parties, enterprises, education—and the list could extend indefinitely. Such a multi-tiered network of connections represents the most viable approach to forging an anti-imperialist, anti-colonial vision that breaks monopolistic structures.

Thus, our fundamental vision for a new world information order in the 21st century is the very purpose of the Global South International Communication Forum. The Forum is dedicated to providing a platform for progressive media outlets worldwide that document historical truth, advocate for peaceful development, and oppose information warfare. Together, we explore an international communication path aligned with the interests of the world's most populous nations.

Thank you all!

1.1.2 Pan-Africanism and Media Colonialism

• Speaker: Fred M'membe

• Year: 2023

Once, in the mists of history, the emerging news media became the focal point of the new democratic movements of the 18th and 19th centuries. As the young Karl Marx described in his first newspaper article opposing Prussian censorship in the 1840s, the press was seen as the embodiment of the people's self-confidence, the vocal bond connecting individuals to the nation and the world, a culture that sublimated material struggles into spiritual ones and conceptualized their crude material forms. But the brief flourishing of the media as humanity's defender and prophet of change did not last long.

Today, we witness the entire Western world grappling with the exhaustion and hollowness of outdated politics. With no alternative channels available, the media has become the sole conduit for political life. There must be opportunities for new progressive media to flourish once more, fostering debates on fresh visions and alternative perspectives.

My concern is that the opportunities of a new media era may be squandered. As President Xi Jinping once noted: "Opportunities always favor the prepared, and they always favor those with vision, ambition, and resilience."

I am referring here to news media in all its forms. As long as people need news, entertainment, and opinion, media will persist in some form—perhaps many forms. What matters is that journalism survives in the new media era as a serious, open, and diverse form of communication. Of course, **as Professor Prasad rightly notes, there is also the question of ownership and control: whose media is it?** Critics of the state of global/Western media often—sometimes obsessively—focus on media ownership. The increasing concentration of news media institutions in the hands of a few media conglomerates is not only blamed as a problem for the media but seems to be a problem for society and the world at large.

The concentration of media ownership within international private conglomerates is certainly a bad thing—nothing to celebrate. It has proven to often impede the flow of information and ideas. Those who hope to see media diversity would not welcome this state of affairs. Yet there is another side to this issue that radical critics overlook: alternative news organizations have failed to sustain a serious audience.

But blaming an "easily duped" and "herd-like" audience, or even blaming Rupert Murdoch, won't make alternative media thrive. Barring an anti-capitalist revolution,

it's hard to envision a miraculous democratization of ownership in Western mainstream news media. So what are the alternatives? We won't know unless we try. If we redirect the energy spent attacking media moguls toward developing ideas and investing in alternative media, the future of progressive journalism—one that both upholds facts and allows countless ideas and opinions to flourish in diverse forms—looks brighter.

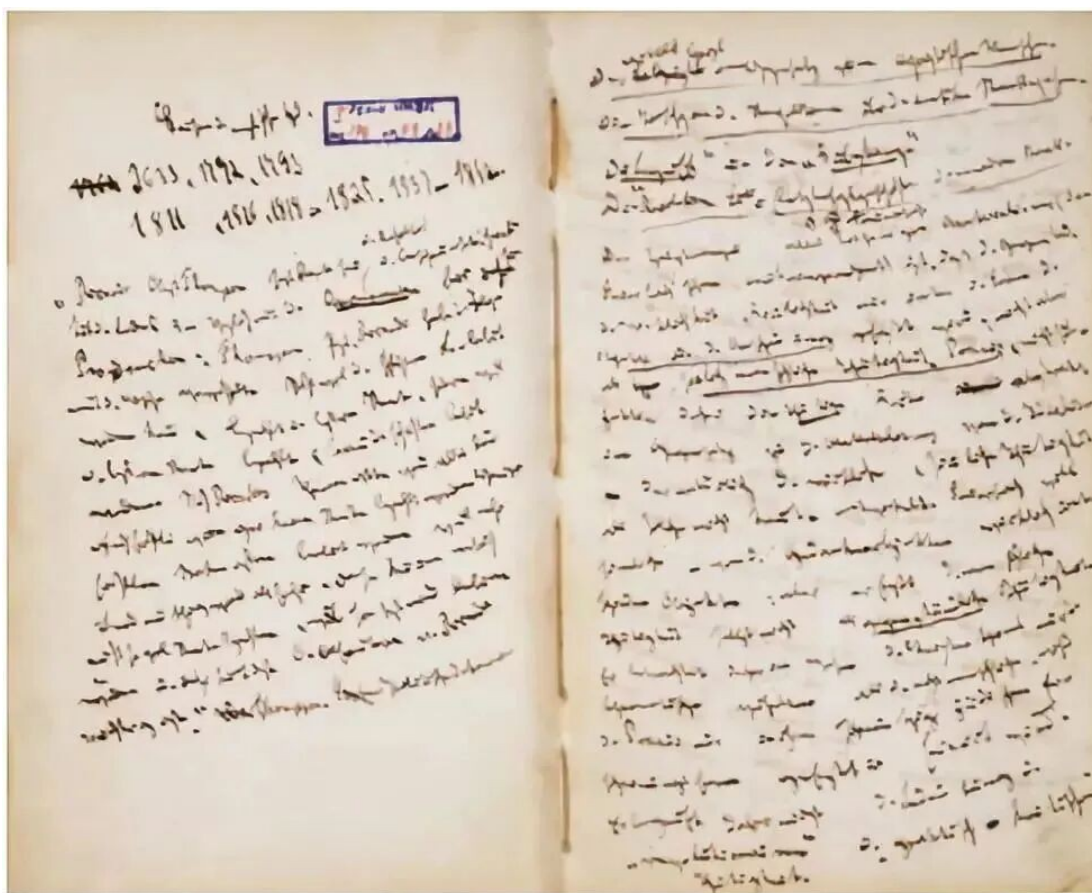
The media **must change**. We need new media and new ideas to prepare people for the future. We must begin building a new consciousness that demands a new world. This new, complex era we inhabit requires new media and principles more than ever—greater awareness and new media to disseminate these ideas. We must seek alternative solutions and acknowledge humanity's capacity to organize our lives and destinies in more rational, humane ways.

Who will be the builders of this new media and the new world we seek? Ourselves.

For this purpose, we gather in Shanghai, where the experience and expertise of teleSUR, RT, and CGTN converge. We will put them to good use. We must put them to good use. What will be our fundamental tools? What will be our fundamental weapons? Ideas will become consciousness. Who will sow them? Who will nurture them? Who will make them invincible? It is we ourselves, gathered here.

These are difficult times; we live in a challenging and trying era. But this should not mean things are getting worse. It signifies a crossroads, a time for decisions and action, where we choose which path our world, its politics, and its economy shall take. We need new ideas, but these new ideas must be disseminated. Who will disseminate them? The imperialist media of today, in its current form and current arrangements? Certainly not. A new media is needed. New arrangements are needed. New organizations are needed. If we are to reverse fate, if the sought-after change is to be achieved, these ideas must reach all those with good intentions.

I firmly believe in Karl Marx's eleventh thesis on Ludwig Feuerbach in "Theses on Feuerbach": "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it." Who will change this world? We gather here today, but to change the world, we must share our ideas with others. Christian believers will agree with my view that the most important and perhaps most intriguing passage in the Bible is the "face-to-face" in 1 John, which states: "In the beginning was the Word." With the Word, everything was created—including the Earth and the humans who inhabit it.



Theses on Feuerbach (Manuscript)

Fidel Castro said that ideas do not produce crises, but crises produce ideas. We are at this stage: the crisis humanity faces today—growing inequality, rising unemployment, increasing poverty, and of course the mounting destruction of the very planet we depend on—is a crisis that is beginning to generate new ideas. But equally, these ideas, if left on the shelf, will be meaningless. They must be disseminated, shared. They must be passed on to everyone else. We are here to contribute in some way, to initiate this process.

Finally, I must once again thank the organizers of this conference for giving us an opportunity to spend a few hours here discussing how to spread these ideas, how to disseminate them as widely as possible across the planet.

Imperialist media will not do this for us. No matter how much we cry out, they will not do it. They treat media as part of capitalism's superstructure, perpetuating ideas that uphold their falsehoods, exploitation, and the degradation of others. A new media is needed to liberate humanity from all these evils—this is essential to ensure our prosperous and peaceful continued existence on this planet. The media present today—particularly teleSUR, RT, CGTN, and others—bear a heavy responsibility, in

my view, to leverage their expertise, resources (including human, financial, technical, and other assets), and capabilities to help create a new media, a new form of communication.



Fidel Castro, the principal architect of the Communist Party of Cuba and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, is revered as the "Father of the Cuban Nation" and served as Cuba's first Supreme Leader.

Our adversaries—those who seek to perpetuate falsehoods, exploitation, and the degradation of others—are investing billions globally to entrench their worldview. The BBC is spending billions of pounds in Africa for this purpose. CNN has poured billions of dollars into Africa, effectively eliminating various pan-African initiatives launched by our own people and readers.

We once had the Pan-African News Agency (PANA), a great initiative launched in the mid-1990s to disseminate news across Africa, which has now been destroyed. It could not continue competing because it lacked adequate support. Yet it was a great vision. The 1991 Windhoek Declaration was a great vision for building a more diverse global media, particularly on the African continent, but it has now vanished.



The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the Windhoek Declaration in December 1993.

This was a vision of UNESCO. We know the current state of UNESCO and the challenges it has consistently faced in creating a fairer, more just, and more equitable world. When it comes to communication, those who seek to dominate the world never gave the vision of the Windhoek Declaration a chance. They never will.

Therefore, I am deeply grateful for the initiative we are participating in today in Shanghai, which seeks to explore how we can fully leverage existing experience, human resources, and intellectual capital to ensure that the ideas generated daily by our readers reach our people, empowering them to fight for their cause.

1.1.3 Three Questions on the Future of Media in the Global South

- Speaker: Prasanth Radhakrishnan

- Year: 2025

I was among those who closely followed the proceedings of the 2023 Global South International Communications Forum and the Shanghai Academic Consensus and its call for a twenty-first-century New World Information and Communication Order. This order is obviously a reference to the original New World Information and Communication Order, which was adopted in 1980, based on the approval of what is called the MacBride Report. The MacBride Report was commissioned by UNESCO. A very eminent panel of journalists and intellectuals were involved in writing it, and it examined what it called the communication problems of the time. In fact, we have just crossed the 45th anniversary of its adoption as that happened during the UNESCO session in October 1980. The fact that it went completely unremarked on except maybe in this forum is a sign of the challenges we face and also the work before us.

It was a result of a long process, actually, this report. Because in the 60s and 70s, there was an attempt by countries of the Global South to build an alternative in the field of communications. This was especially through concrete collaboration between news agencies of Global South countries with a key moment being the formation of the Pool of Press Agencies of the Non-Aligned Countries. By 1981, 87 organizations were working together to exchange 40,000 words per day in four languages. But this was not just the exchange of information because they were building a process. The complementary efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement and the socialist bloc produced a process which analyzed the material conditions in which information was produced and disseminated and sought to build alternatives. The MacBride Report is a great example because what it does is it examines every aspect of communication: who controls what you call the hardware, who trains the journalists, how is the unevenness in information affecting us, the fact that AFP, AP and Reuters still control so much of our information, what role do communities play in creating and producing and consuming news. It examined all of these aspects and came up with very concrete recommendations and solutions to build a freer, more just, more effective and better-balanced international communications system. Reading the report today is an interesting experience. One is struck both by the idealism and the concreteness of the report and while some aspects, especially those about technology are outdated, other bits of analysis and recommendations are incredibly relevant.

So today in Shanghai, when you're talking about building a new order for this century, we need to also construct a similar process. And in this context, I'm trying to ask a few questions.

One of the key aspects of the Shanghai Academic Consensus, which is very important, is the question of building a united international communications front in solidarity against imperialism and neocolonialism. Over the past few years, we've seen this united front in action when journalists from the Global South, especially brave Palestinian journalists, are fighting back against western narratives, against western propaganda.

But in addition to that, we also need to ask some structural questions. Let me tell you a story. In the morning Kambale mentioned the undersea cables. Many of you may have heard about the 600-odd undersea cables that are responsible for 90% of internet traffic in the world today. Now there are only four or five companies in the world which have the ability to lay down these cables under the sea. In 2023, a news report came which talked about a particular huge and massive cable called SeaWeMe-6 undersea cable.

The Chinese company HMN Tech was supposed to get the contract for that cable, because of the fact that they offered a much cheaper price than the US company SubCom. But soon it turned out they did not get the contract. So what happened? US government officials went to the various companies involved in this cable project and warned members of the consortium of sanctions on the pipeline and offered them training grants, leading to a split among the consortium members and SubCom ultimately bagging the project. They gave inducements, they offered money, they spent millions of dollars to make sure that the Chinese company HMN Tech did not get the contract for the SeaWeMe-6 cable. This was not a commercial decision. This is a strategic decision, because the United States actually had an inter-agency initiative called Team Telecom. What was Team Telecom's goal? It was to make sure that undersea cables that reach the United States did not pass through China.

As of 2023, Team Telecom has disrupted four plans for undersea cables including those supported by Google, Meta, and Amazon. They would go to companies, they forced Google, they forced Meta to actually reroute the cables so that these cables don't come to or do not pass through China. This is a very important question for us to think about and address.

Let's take another example. One thing that Kambale mentioned is the internet blackout that took place in Africa last year. In March 2024, damage to undersea cables affected internet connectivity in many parts of Africa causing disruption to a cross-section of people. A question before these countries was what could be done

to avoid such disruptions. The Ghanaian government's solution seems to have been granting a license to Elon Musk's Starlink with the following months seeing a spike in the number of Starlink connections. The person who benefited from that blackout was Elon Musk, because his Starlink got their license much more quickly. A huge number of people in many countries registered for Starlink.

When we are talking about building a united front against imperialism and neocolonialism through communication, we need to ask these questions. We are already talking about the platforms. We're already talking about Google and YouTube and Facebook. But we need to center this question in our coverage, in our analysis about who controls the cables and satellites. That's very important. Discussions in many of these countries focused on the need for better resilience and digital sovereignty. It is clear however that unless the people have a say and a stake in the spine of the global communications network, these discussions will remain only theoretical. In the space of communications, the questions before us is how we extend our understanding of imperialism to the realm of technology and make it a core part of our coverage. The US-launched trade wars and the tech wars are also fundamentally communication wars.

Now the second question has to do with AI. There was a discussion about it in the morning. I found it very interesting and useful. I'm not going to talk about some of the concerns which are often talked about. The loss of jobs - it's a big issue, we need to talk about it. Hallucinations - again, a problem we can address. I'm looking at some of the positives. Now, it is undeniable that because of AI, there will be a huge increase in the number as well as depth of articles, videos, content. But I think from the Global South, we need to see the question of AI as not just a tool of content production, but a tool of content distribution as well.

An entire generation of people is not only using AI for information, but as a way of making sense of the world. Their social political formation is happening through AI. It means that when young people use it to ask personal questions, political questions, ideological questions, it's no longer like social media where we could set up our own accounts and try to push back. That's no longer possible. AI is a black box. What do media of the Global South do in a situation like this?

It's very important. Because, in a country like India where I come from, companies like Google and OpenAI, are offering their advanced models free for a year. OpenAI, Google, Perplexity are all giving advanced models free for one year for Indian customers. You can soon see that companies like OpenAI, just like Facebook and Google did, will go to policy makers and try to influence AI policy in all these

countries. How do we as media of the Global South address this at a time when we don't have the ability to influence content creation?

I think the answer lies in something Tica was talking about in the morning when she talked about the experiences in Brazil, which is that the process of constructing education about AI has to be something media organizations are also involved in. The process of introducing young people to AI as a tool is something media organizations also need to take up. I know it's one extra task when there are already so many tasks. But without that it is very difficult, because the media of the Global South loses the space. There's no chance for them to push their agenda. So unless we are able to work with young people as they use AI, try to integrate our points, try to make them aware of the biases, try to make them aware of how news can be consumed, what is communication - it's a very difficult task for us

The final question is also something connected to the Shanghai Consensus, where there was a call for establishing international solidarity in communications theory and practice. What is solidarity in concrete terms? To me, solidarity is a way of expressing our shared humanity. The journalists from the west tend to see us as either an amorphous mass or as individuals. Like when a western journalist comes to a Global South country and interviews a taxi driver. We are either seen as an amorphous mass or as individuals. We are not seen as members of communities. We are not seen as members of organizations. We are not seen as people who are constantly and consistently in struggle, who are building projects. So when it comes to creating solidarity in concrete terms, I think it is important to uplift those stories of construction.

Something very interesting is happening in the Sahel region in Africa right now. The people in countries like Mali and Burkina Faso and Niger are, in the face of great violence, trying to construct a project of sovereignty. Now you won't find that in the media of the global north. But when we are reporting about it, we need to talk about it in the context of the organizations, the people who are working in those organizations, how they're working with the governments, what are they trying to construct, how are they evolving. That process is so vitally important.

And I'd like to really point out the work done by my friends and colleagues in Peoples Dispatch and also Brasil de Fato, who have actually tried to do exactly that, who have tried to see the processes that are going on in the Sahel. What is their vision? What is the agenda? So that somebody sitting in Latin America or somebody sitting in the farthest corners of Asia sees those struggles and feels like this is my struggle, too. I think that kind of storytelling is very essential.

I'll probably end with a very similar story. Recently, the state I come from in India, Kerala, became the second region in the world after China to eliminate extreme poverty. It is a remarkable achievement in the face of great constraints. The State of Kerala is ruled by a government led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and this elimination of poverty was achieved after an extensive process of surveys, welfare measures, and community mobilization.

The interesting thing is there was a lot of news coverage that came out after that, talking about the numbers, the schemes, the processes, all of which is very important. But the one story that struck me the most, which actually came in a mainstream organization, was the story of a family. Both of them were visually challenged and they didn't have a house. They needed a house because they were in extreme poverty. They could not have that house because the land on which they were living was in the name of the man and his brother. Now, the problem was that the man's brother went missing 27 years ago. Nobody knew where he was. So as part of the drive to eliminate extreme poverty, government agencies, the community organizations, tracked the person and found him. They searched for the man, went to another province, finally found the man's brother working in a restaurant somewhere, brought him back, got him to sign. Then the house was built for the visually challenged family and their daughter. This anecdote, which appeared in a mainstream media outlet gave a minute yet powerful example of that process in action.

I think a story like that really brings in, in one small story, everything about a poverty alleviation drive: our aspirations, our humanity, our community, how we work, how governments and civil society and people work together. All of that so powerfully comes out. So when we are talking about such stories, I think it's very essential to bring them out.

I'll wind up now with just one last point, which is a line I really like by Antonio Gramsci, where he says that new intellectuals should be constructors, organizers and permanent persuaders. I think those three terms really define what we need to do as media of the Global South. Be constructors, organisers and permanent persuaders.

Thank you!

1.2 Africa's Media Sovereignty and Anti-Colonial Narratives

1.2.1 Media Representations of Popular Resistance in North Africa

• Speaker: Ghassane Koumiya

• Year: 2023

Before discussing media in North Africa, it is essential to approach the seminar's title from an ideological and historical perspective. We must rethink the notions and concepts we use and the reasons for their use, ensuring they serve our objectives and the reality we are collectively constructing. From the outset, this conference is defined by the term "South". The term is not a geographic concept; it is defined in opposition to "the North," which is also not strictly a geographic concept but rather represents Western domination over the world. Therefore, before we talk about media from a Southern perspective in the African or North African region, we must first understand what we mean by a Southern understanding of concepts—the South as a source and framework for understanding information and concepts.

The South is defined by its opposition to what we call Northern concepts, the Northern narrative, and Northern domination, which can also be termed Western domination. This Western domination did not only manifest through colonialism, wars, and imperialism, but also through how the history of our peoples was shaped. The reality we wish to cover and transmit as media professionals has been shaped by a history of military intervention, economic and social exploitation, and Eurocentric knowledge production. My focus here is on knowledge production from a Eurocentric point of view. We have all been taught in schools that most academic institutions are related to the academy. If we look at this term from a formal institutional standpoint, it traces back to Plato's Academy, which, within Western Hellenic knowledge production traditions, is considered the first well-established institution for study and knowledge creation.

However, a brief historical assessment shows that the first institutions were established thousands of years earlier, with archaeological evidence dating back to c. 3800 BCE from Iraq, as well as from Africa, China, and Asia, which contradicts the Eurocentric view that knowledge began and developed with the Greeks. It is also important to note that Plato's Academy was a center only for the rich and not for the poor, an ideological point we should remember. The initial reason for its establishment was to serve knowledge production for its own sake and prevent the poor from accessing it. I am highlighting this history to help define what we understand as the South, because the concept of the academy was introduced to our peoples by colonialism. Since then, it has been considered a normal, natural

institution that produces knowledge for our people, and its influence on our elites and population persists to this day.

The narrative that all cultures' history traces back to the Greeks, then to Europeans, and then to what is called the West, is a politically driven narrative known as the Aryan model. The Aryan model of understanding knowledge is based on the perception that the history of humanity was made by European whites. In opposition to this, much contemporary knowledge production from a Southern point of view has begun to develop a model that considers knowledge a human-constructed process extending beyond the Greeks to all Middle Eastern cultures, such as those in Mesopotamia, and to Far Eastern cultures, especially China and India. This is critical when discussing the perception of the South today, as it is also a perception of history. As I mentioned, this history is driven by two politically-defined distinctions: one where history started with the Greeks and was dominated by whites, and a counter-history, which we are now shaping, that recognizes history goes back many thousands of years before the Greeks and is a continuation of peoples' processes of understanding themselves, their reality, and building their welfare.

This leads to a discussion of how media in our region has been shaped by this Eurocentric viewpoint. The region I am speaking about is North Africa. While North Africa has existed for thousands of years, with the latest archaeological evidence showing the oldest known origins of humankind are from Africa, its political sense was defined by colonialism. The existence of countries like Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Mauritania is a political decision of colonial forces. After these countries gained independence, their people needed tools to build their prosperity, economies, societies, and knowledge production. At the media level, many institutions were created that were mostly linked to the post-independence regimes, serving a post-colonial agenda that reflected the peoples' aspirations to build a modern society. This led to the emergence of new media outlets and printing houses in North Africa.

Egypt was one of the main sources of media outlets and production facilities, playing a special role in the development of media across North Africa. Egypt primarily focused on a Pan-Arabist press agenda that was anti-colonial and anti-imperialist, but from a Pan-Arabist perspective that was somewhat detached from the real origin of the problem, which is the question of capitalism. Egypt saw a flourishing of media and publishing houses, including about 200 short-lived newspapers and 15 magazines. The Arabic-speaking world is also linked to other countries in the Middle East and Near East, which have their own history of media development, particularly Lebanon, which was very rich in media creation. At that time, media

was either state-owned or party-owned, with parties using it as a means of organizing, making propaganda, getting their political message out, and mobilizing people for their own objectives. Notable examples were the Lebanese paper media outlets As-Safir, An-Nahar, and Al-Liwa'. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, this media sphere faced financial and political challenges, which led to the collapse of many party-related media outlets by the end of the last century and the rise of what is called independent media.

The term "independent media" is itself critical because its independence is questionable. Much like non-profit organizations that often serve the interests of the parties behind them, the emergence of so-called independent media was merely Western-funded corporations trying to leverage the New World Order that emerged after 1990. These outlets, funded by US and British corporations, aimed to make the Western narrative dominant in North Africa and our region. While considered independent, they served an agenda linked to their funding parties. These media outlets included The Independent, Newsweek, and others related to organizations in Egypt like Al-Ahram, in Kuwait like Al-Watan, and in Saudi Arabia like Al-Hayat and Asharq Al-Awsat. These outlets, which had dominated the Western narrative, were later challenged by the development of communication tools as more people gained access to the internet, providing them with more sources of interactive information beyond traditional media outlets. This led to the collapse of print media and the emergence of electronic news websites. The first electronic websites in the region were online versions of print media, but new media also developed, especially in the Middle East, such as Elaph. This online newspaper was started by a Saudi Arabian media professional who is considered the "Rupert Murdoch of the Arab world" and who also worked for Asharq Al-Awsat.

These new media outlets were further promoted by the emergence of the Al Jazeera channel, which became a significant source of information for the Arab-speaking world. Al Jazeera served not only as a source of information but also for mobilization during the Arab Spring, shaping the perceptions of many activists with its Muslim Brotherhood agenda. It also supported pro-Arab Spring regimes, for example, in Tunisia and with what happened in Syria, which drove many other countries and regimes to produce their own media outlets similar to Al Jazeera. Ultimately, numerous media outlets have been created, all driven by specific agendas of different entities, whether countries or parties. For this reason, we believe that to shape the world of today, we need to have our own media assets. We need to collaborate and build solidarity to create the self-image that we wish to build together for the future and prosperity of our people.

1.2.2 American Soft Power and Its Media Hegemony in Africa

- Speaker: Mikaela Nhondo Erskog

- Year: 2023

From the US-Africa Leaders' Summit in December 2022 to four high-level US government representative visits to Africa between January and March, including Vice President Kamala Harris, the United States is scrambling for Africa after decades of neglect, half-hearted gestures, later all-out races, and Trump-era foreign policies. With deepening Africa-China ties, growing non-alignment sentiment, and increasing self-cooperation mechanisms, Washington's scramble for hegemony in Africa is unsurprising, echoing the question: how and when did we lose Africa.

The current US response strategy to reinvigorate soft power and media hegemony on the continent became evident in August 2022 with a new Africa-focused foreign policy. The 17-page document mentioned China and Russia ten times combined, pledging to counter harmful foreign actors, without once referencing sovereignty or Africa's sovereign development interests. Despite officials repeating that African leaders freely choose partners and claiming US interest in bolstering Africa's development plans, the document unabashedly centers US ambitions on competitive terms around Africa's foreign partners' presence and relations rather than supporting African goals.

This strategy revives old McCarthyism, shifting from trade and development contests where China made mutually beneficial advances over two decades, toward militarism reminiscent of past decades. At Tricontinental, we documented this shift in studies available on our website. Part of this militaristic move, as Ben noted, involves information warfare where the US still reigns supreme across Africa.

The March 2022 COMPETES Act exemplifies this approach. The US frames everything competitively, combatively—through fighting and battles. The Act addresses US tech, communications, foreign relations, and national security, pledging approximately \$500 million to the US Agency for Global Media, explicitly framed in aggressive terms targeting foreign partners rather than African realities.

Consequently, Africa-based civil society organizations increasingly gear up to undermine China's development cooperation while promoting the US democratic development model. Months after the Act's passage, reports circulated in Zimbabwe about US embassy-funded educational workshops encouraging African journalists to target and criticize Chinese investments. The implementing local organization, Information for Development Trust, received funding from the US government's

National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Though this information was available two years ago, it's now inaccessible online.

This funding requires greater mapping and awareness among African media workers. As Ben and others noted, these dynamics emerge from historical processes forged during colonial, neo-colonial, and neoliberal eras. To illustrate the decades-long trajectory of US media strategy, I'll reference South Africa where I lived many years.

Progress against the apartheid regime was obstructed by Washington, which viewed the situation through frameworks diminishing Soviet then foreign partners' relationships. Despite documented atrocities against South Africa's black majority and neighboring countries, the regime was considered a strategic bulwark against socialism and Soviet influence. During the mid-to-late 1980s, while aiding apartheid South Africa's war against liberation struggles, Washington simultaneously orchestrated targeted media campaigns claiming to educate black populations about democracy.

A 1989 internal communication outlined funneling hundreds of thousands of dollars to South African media outlets and journalists to create awareness of democratic ideals among black communities. The US government stated in a grant to a media group: "A concrete discussion of democratic values will help counter strong Marxist campaigns coercing South African blacks, pointing toward more desirable and achievable democratic government forms. Systematic myth dissemination generates large-scale awareness of democratic principles." This dismissed mass movements, trade unions, and women's organizations operating throughout the 1980s as unaware of democratic values, asserting democratic principles could only propagate through regular publications in popular black media.

They co-opted City Press, then South Africa's most widely circulated newspaper, to promote their exclusive US development model as the optimal democracy form. The NED served as principal funder during the 1980s. Though branded an independent nonprofit, the NED was founded by the US government under Reagan. Founder Alan Weinstein stated in the 1990s: "Much NED work today was done covertly by the CIA 25 years ago."

Concurrently funding Afghan Mujahideen, Nicaraguan Contras, Eastern European Anti-Soviet unions, and Grenadian anti-government groups, the NED continues funding civil society organizations from this specific historical viewpoint. This underscores the need for media projects recognizing political stakes, conjunctures, and class interests.

Capitalist ideology dehumanizes, humiliates, and fuels crises; only anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist media frameworks enable truth-speaking and grassroots organizing.

Many dedicated organizations undertake this work, requiring amplification through solidarity-based communication channels. We face shared challenges requiring collective solutions. At Dongsheng, which shares China-related stories internationally, my podcast "The Crane" exemplifies our dual challenge: sensing macro and micro moments simultaneously. While recognizing most African countries' refusal to join US-led NATO wars breaks historical patterns, we must also acknowledge governments resisting NATO often fail to advance their peoples' socioeconomic interests.

Media now confronts the challenge of whose stories get told, how they're told, and how to encompass complexity—from South Africa's National Union of Metalworkers to Brazilian intellectuals—using varied formats to multiply impact with limited resources. In Africa, the revolving door between US-funded efforts and dominant media platforms demands innovation, creativity, and collaboration premised on solidarity and alternative politics dominating our regions.

1.2.3 From Lumumba's Assassination to Today's Congo Crisis: The Role of Western Media in Undermining International Solidarity

• Speaker: Kambale Musavuli

• Year: 2023

I am from Pan African Television, a station in Accra, Ghana, that broadcasts to about 46 African countries, Southern Europe, and what they today call the Middle East and West Asia. We strive to bring the African story to the people and bringing that story must also include history. As someone said earlier, that history is on our side, and as she was sharing that, I kept telling myself: Which history would I share? As a communist, the history I learned came from the Belgians, and it took me becoming a refugee in the United States to actually learn Congo's history.

I was 17 years old on May 16, 1997, the day before Kabila took power in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We were living in Kinshasa in a state of turmoil. I remember the night vividly because of my upbringing. My uncle was in the military, so he was on the front-line fighting, and of course, they took over the capital. I remember seeing a lot of guns and things that I have never seen since. In most of the major mainstream media, there was no news that American soldiers landed at a school called the American School of Kinshasa (TASOK), where they had the soccer field, and then entered the city and fought alongside those who were taking the capital city. It never made it into the news, but that is what I know happened to us that night.

What really helped us survive that day was a radio channel. The only one broadcasting throughout the entire takeover of the capital was Voice of America. It stays with me to this day. The more we discuss it, the more it comes back to me. It makes me wonder how it's possible that in the midst of war, when the national TV station was no longer working and the local stations were also down, everyone in the capital had to listen to American journalists telling us, "Now they have taken over N'djili Airport; we can see them near the palace where Mobutu, who was the president at the time, lived." Our understanding of our history is based on what we hear. So, we have to deconstruct the information that we get. It's not just about saying "history is on our side" or that we have to tell our history; we have to rethink what we have been taught, relearn many things, and then tell a new story—the story of the struggle of the people.

On September 8, 2019, ABC News published an article with the title: "Singer, tailor, soldier, spy: A CIA officer's life as the front man of one of Uganda's top bands." I was already aware of this history and was alarmed when the Central Intelligence Agency

(CIA) was boasting about a new director they were going to appoint. In the listing of this director there was a Black man, Darryl Blocker, whose face looked familiar. From our perspective on the African continent, a lot of people come here, including missionaries, journalists, and artists. We are now finding out that when Louis Armstrong came to the Congo through the cultural diplomacy program of the U.S. State Department, there was a CIA agent with him. Now I am also finding out that in 2004, an African American musician was with a Ugandan band called the Kampala All Stars, and he was being nominated to be the new CIA director. Most people in Uganda, when they heard that news, probably said, "Wait a minute, I used to see him in the bar in my city. This is the guy from the Kampala All Stars." This raises the question of soft power and how it shows up on the African continent. What information is collected, and how do they actually influence how we think about it?

I now want to shift. Rather than speaking about soft power or hard power, I want to talk about what actually scares me to death every day of my life: the words "Hillary Clinton." Most people did not watch her nomination hearing for Secretary of State, but I watched it religiously. When she was speaking, she said something I had never heard before: "smart power." She was speaking to the U.S. Congress about what she would do if she became Secretary of State, and which tools of diplomacy they would use. It was not just hard power, and it was not just soft power; it was "smart power." The way she defined smart power is what we are now, a decade later, discussing. She strategically spoke about the role of technology for both hard and soft power, explaining how the use of social media would be critical for U.S. diplomacy and for pushing its foreign policy abroad. Most people were not aware that this happened, and as years go by, I see more and more how technology is being used as a way to actually advance U.S. interests.

I was glad to see young Egyptians, when she went to Egypt, refuse to meet with her. Some of us know about what happened during the Arab Spring to subvert the youth movements on the ground. There were youth groups funded by the U.S. State Department, and they were very skilled with technology. We started wondering how these youth could be so skilled with technology; they are so much more advanced than anyone else. We all use the same tools and have social media accounts, but how is it possible that their accounts are reaching so many more people? That is how we know that they have colonized and are controlling the algorithms, making sure that certain information gets to people so that they can also confuse the youth about what truly changes the world. I insisted in 2012 that Facebook does not create the revolution; it's the work on the ground. Liking a post does not create a revolution. So it is to figure out how technology supports movements, but propaganda has been strategically used by the State Department. This is because most of the social media platforms that people around the world use are companies based in the United

States, so they abide by U.S. law. They create backdoors for the U.S. government. The many revelations from sources like Edward Snowden and WikiLeaks have allowed us to see what is actually happening.

What is happening with technology on the African continent? I will bring it back to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). I was in the DRC at least four times last year and became very alarmed when I found out that Netflix, Google, Facebook, and Twitter are now in Kinshasa, and that Google and Facebook are building data servers across Congo. They have built three exchange servers within the country. For the past two or three years, it has been very noticeable that if you want to know what is happening in the DRC, you can get it on social media. One of the major Congolese languages, Lingala, is even automatically translated on Facebook. We found it very strange that when things are happening, we are able to get information so easily. When I went on the ground, I saw that they had built caches—they copy the servers of Google, Facebook, and Netflix—and put them in three major cities: Kinshasa; Mbuji-Mayi, the region where the current president of the Congo is from; and Goma in the east, where the uprising is happening. When I spoke to young people to help them understand what is actually happening and how data is much easier for people to get, we realized that we are providing more information than ever before, but no one in the country even knew this was happening, even though these corporations were not sharing this information. What could happen to Congolese who are putting their information on these platforms, especially those who are critical of the United States government and are trying to expose the memorandum of understanding that Congo, Zambia, and the U.S. have built around cobalt? Will they end up like Press TV, which had its local press in the DRC shut down because it was sharing critical information on what is happening in the U.S.?

With the few minutes I have left, I want to focus on another important date: May 25, 2023. The president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is coming to China for his first state visit. What has been fascinating since the announcement toward the end of December is the unbelievable amount of negative press on China. Every other day, I am receiving videos, articles, and information about the Chinese in the DRC. It is fascinating because the story is a single story, but the different articles present different angles of the same story. One article may focus on one part of the contract, while another may say something else about it, but it is literally the same single story. This is happening at an alarming rate that makes you wonder how. Three days ago, on my WhatsApp, I received a fifteen-minute compressed video of a whole segment by Hans Backer on the Chinese contract, sent to me by Congolese. How are they able to get to us? We are all using the same tools; we have video cameras and social media accounts. Why is this information circulating at a faster rate? This is not just a question of saying, "Let's do what they do," but rather of

learning much more scientifically to recognize that we cannot simply use the same means that they have. I strongly believe that even if we are more advanced in technology, if we do not have that people-to-people connection between the Chinese and African people to actually meet and discuss these things, there is a concrete program being planned to make sure that people think China is the enemy.

I will conclude by sharing a long quote that relates to the first point: "history is on our side." As I said, the question is, which history? We did get the answer from Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), who was brutally assassinated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) before January 17, 1961. Before he died, he sent a letter to his wife. In his last letter, he told us what we need to do. He let us know that today, as we are building solidarity, this is what we have to do: "History will one day have its say, but it will not be the history that Brussels, Paris, Washington, or the United Nations will teach, but that which they will teach in the countries emancipated from colonialism and its puppets. Africa will write its own history, and it will be to the north and to the south of the Sahara a history of glory and dignity." This is why we are here. We came to China to meet our comrades from around the world to build the solidarity necessary to tell our own story. We must rethink the history that has been taught to us, tell our history of dignity and glory, as we unite in communications to tell the world that we are all together in this.

1.2.4 Media Sovereignty Neocolonial Information Control African Narratives Global South Cooperation

- Speaker: Akende M'membe

- Year: 2024

Yesterday, a comrade from Ghana shared an encounter on Shanghai's streets where someone inquired if he was from Africa. This contrasted sharply with my university experiences in the United Kingdom, both in Manchester and London. While I too faced that question frequently in the West, it invariably led to follow-ups about wildlife or hunger in Africa—questions about elephants, lions, and giraffes supposedly inhabiting our backyards, or the famine televised by BBC, Sky News, and other Western outlets. I never once heard acknowledgment of the West's historical oppression, humiliation, and subjugation across Africa and the Global South.

The narrative of vast resources systematically extracted from the Global South remains untold. Instead, daily news and documentaries perpetuate our humiliation, depicting us as inferior while positioning the West as the sole possessor of knowledge and resources to solve challenges they largely created. Yesterday's reference to "serenity" in VJ's speech recalled writings on neocolonial structures built upon five controls: financed natural resources, science and technology, weapons, military, and information. This raises a critical question: How can the Global South foster a new information and communication era?

Achieving this requires confronting Western investment in media monopolization. The answer lies in telling our own stories, writing our own histories, and providing our own analyses of global issues. Such sovereignty can only be realized through close collaboration within Global South media. Information and data projects are foundational—they underpin our ability to reshape the information landscape. As echoed by fellow panelists, our own platforms are indispensable for countering Western media dominance. Reuters, BBC, CNN, Sky News, The New York Times, and the Financial Times must not dictate how the Global South understands itself or even the West.

Consider this week's visit by outgoing U.S. President Biden to Angola. Sub-Saharan headlines in Western media proclaimed: "Thousands cheer Biden's arrival in Angola for his promised sub-Saharan African visit" (Associated Press) and "Biden's visit to Africa will focus on history and economic hope" (The New York Times). Yet the true objective centered on the Lobito Corridor—a legacy infrastructure project securing U.S. supply chains for Congolese and Zambian minerals via Angola's Liberty Port and

Benguela rail. This facilitates continued exploitation of African resources while silencing African voices demanding "hands off our minerals."

In closing, our future hinges on collaboration within the Global South to build sovereign information and communication systems. We cannot remain dominated by neocolonial media structures designed to humiliate, subjugate, and perpetuate imperialism. Our ideas must dominate international discourse.

1.2.5 International Media Coverage of Africa: Perspectives and Challenges

- Speaker: Paula Slier

- Year: 2023

I've been with RT (Russia Today) since its inception in 2005. As a South African with a distinct accent, I managed RT's Middle East office for 18 years before returning to establish RT Africa, now headquartered in South Africa with contributors across 33 African nations.

My presentation addresses "International Media Reporting on Africa: Perceptions and Challenges" in three sections. First, the challenges of reporting in Africa compared to my two decades covering the Middle East, including the Arab Spring which we termed the "Twitter Revolution" due to social media's unprecedented impact. Second, Africa's changing perception of the world. Third, RT's experiences establishing an African channel with Russian perspective.

A fundamental error is viewing Africa as a single country rather than 54 distinct nations each with unique challenges. Media landscapes are increasingly controlled, complicating objective journalism—especially for foreign media facing access barriers. When critical of governments, foreign journalists rely on local reporters who face direct repercussions, unlike "parachute journalists" who avoid consequences. For example, RT Africa was the sole crew permitted in the Central African Republic after three foreign journalists were assassinated; our access depended on government invitation.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, logistical hurdles like accreditation denials amid M23 rebel conflicts create extreme difficulties. Somalia—the world's least-visited country with only 100 visitors last year—allowed only our team entry recently. Al-Shabab militants openly carried AK-47s in streets and humanitarian camps. Government security prevented attacks because we reported on famine rather than security—had we done the latter; we'd have been targets. Despite danger, Somalis displayed exceptional hospitality, contradicting media portrayals.

Journalists in Africa "disappear" rather than are killed, partly due to unmarked conflict boundaries. Northern Mozambique hosts 24-armed groups, yet few understand tribal dynamics. Currently, 13 African conflicts—fueled by the West and underreported—persist. Western media frames them as "counterterrorism" to legitimize intervention; Mozambique's tribal resource conflict is mislabeled a terror war.

Media constraints include compressed storytelling (1.5–2.5 minutes) and access barriers. Headlines prioritize Western narratives: 21 million face starvation in the Horn of Africa amid UN aid cuts—yet this is ignored. The "if it bleeds, it leads" mentality fuels conflicts, as seen in Kenya's filming restrictions justified by counterterrorism.

Africans increasingly reject Western dictates, seeking autonomy. Mozambique's education decolonization exemplifies reclaiming cultural sovereignty. Russia gains traction with no colonial history and Soviet-era liberation support; China invests economically. Conversely, Western powers are seen extracting resources. Africa's mineral wealth—cobalt, copper, diamonds, coltan (columbite-tantalite), lithium—correlates with conflict zones. Western powers benefit from instability, hindering governance and journalistic access.

Regarding the Ukraine-NATO conflict—more accurately a Ukraine-West conflict—African nations increasingly support Russia but fear losing U.S. aid. A Somali minister stated: "We support whoever pays most." Africa transforms through BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) expansion and commodity-backed currencies reducing dollar reliance.

¹1.2.6 South African Media and Class Struggle

- Speaker: Phakamile Hlubi-Majola

- Year: 2023

It is coming at a crucial time as it focuses on communication as a tool for solidarity. At the conclusion of this conference, we must be able to answer what the best strategy is to achieve solidarity and how we can go about implementing it. For this panel, I will be focusing on media and class struggle in South Africa. The purpose of my presentation is to discuss the challenges we face as an organization in attempting to expand the voices of the working class. This is an issue that is quite close to my heart. Before working at NUMSA (National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa), I was a journalist for ten years, working at several well-known corporate media organizations in South Africa, including Eyewitness News (EWN).

I recall my first day on the job at EWN when my editor asked me what I thought my role as a journalist was. My enthusiastic response was, "to defend the defenseless, to be a voice for the voiceless." She looked at me and said, "No, that's not your job. Your job is to get content for the benefit of advertisers." I must say that for her to be so explicit about the true function of the media—that it operates to defend and advance the interests of advertisers and corporations—was a real eye-opening experience for me. What she said largely defines the attitude of media in South Africa. South African media is extremely corporate and neoliberal; it unashamedly advances the interests of Western imperialism. This is consistent across the board, whether you are looking at public corporations, such as the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation), or other media outlets. When you come to South Africa, you can tune into any radio station or TV channel and what you will hear is a narrative that advances imperialism, neocapitalism, and neocolonialism, with a particular anti-working-class, anti-black, and hostile stance towards any kind of alternative view.

This issue was highlighted in 2012 when mine workers in the northwest of South Africa, in an area called Marikana, embarked on a lengthy unprotected strike. I will provide some details. Marikana is a very poor place where Lonmin Mines, a major platinum provider, is based. In August 2012, the strike ended with 34 of the workers being shot live on television by a member of the South African police services. The Marikana massacre has come to define what South Africa is today: a country that was liberated by the ANC (African National Congress), but now actively oppresses the working class. What is ironic about what happened in Marikana is that the

police's decision to shoot at unarmed workers was triggered by an email sent by Cyril Ramaphosa, who is our president today. Cyril Ramaphosa was on the board of Lonmin and wrote an email to members of the security cluster, who responded with heavy-handedness to the unarmed workers. The narrative that emerged from the media about the Marikana massacre was one that blamed the workers for the protest, positioning them as violent savages who were, in the view of the media, responsible for their own massacre.

The South African media never views capitalism as violent. I was a practicing journalist at the time and spent a lot of time in Marikana. The violence of capitalism is expressed there. The entire area is undeveloped, lacking sanitation, decent housing, and electricity, and yet one of the biggest platinum firms extracts its wealth from that area and gives nothing back to the community. That is what the workers at Marikana were ultimately fighting for—a better life. It is deeply ironic that a man like Ramaphosa, a former trade unionist who helped form the National Union of Mineworkers, was the very person who inspired the security forces to react with such violence. I would urge you to read an analysis done by Ilva Gomerday of the University of Johannesburg, where she researched how the reporting on Marikana was characterized by "embedded journalism, sensationalism, and polarization of views." She found that the media acted as a powerful loudspeaker for the interests of the South African political and socioeconomic nexus, neglecting the fundamental problems underlying labor relations in the country.

Another classic example of the hostility and intolerance the South African media has for alternative views is how they have covered the issue of the war in Ukraine. It is a completely one-sided narrative, with absolutely no tolerance for dissenting views. Almost all media platforms, especially the so-called independent ones, have described it as an invasion by Russia. They criticize the South African government for being neutral on this issue and will not tolerate any dissenting voices. The night before this speech, I was engaged in a debate on Twitter with one of these journalists who was so offended by my comment that South Africa should not get involved in this war and should instead advance its own national interests.

I also stated that this is not a neutral matter but is about NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) aggression. His response to me was, "it means that NUMSA supports the slaughtering of babies." This is the kind of mentality that characterizes the South African media discourse, where it is impossible to engage in a nuanced debate on issues. The dominant framework in South African media is defined by the West and by Bretton Woods institutions, which are advancing the continuation of imperialism in all of these newsrooms. At the same time, there is a real fear and hatred of communism, and the involvement of Russia has reawakened these issues,

as during apartheid, communism was something the government was obsessed with.

I really enjoyed the input from Professor Vijay Prashad, who spoke about the suffocating nature of corporate media, which is a perfect description, because there is no space for alternative views. If you offer a different opinion, you will be labeled. In South Africa, there are 40 commercial and public broadcast stations. The largest media house by far is the SABC, with over 30 million viewers in the country. They remain the most popular news platform and also have many very popular radio stations. However, even though the SABC is a public broadcaster, its narrative has unfortunately been heavily influenced by these right-wing, so-called independent media houses. As a result, they also churn out the same propaganda that many of these other organizations do.

Given this context, how has NUMWSA managed to operate in this space? Our strategy has been to unashamedly promote the working class and our message of Marxist-Leninism. We are able to get our message broadcast every day, whether the media likes it or not, because we recognize that power is not just in the media; it is in the 350,000 metal workers who can shut down the economy when they go on strike. So, even if they cannot stand us, they cannot ignore us. Ultimately, whatever media strategy we build, we must ensure that we take the movements with us and that the working class is driving the agenda and the message, because that is where the real power lies.

Part of the work we have been doing to advance this agenda is the training we offer at the school in Bela Bela. This work is key to tackling the suffocating narrative we see in the media. Doctor M'membe was absolutely right when he said that you cannot rely on imperialists to drive your message; we must build our own platforms. That is exactly what the Bela Bela school is doing. This year, the school was held in Ghana, which was a very interesting experience. We get students from all over the continent and also from Brazil and other places where we have relationships. We take them through media training, and in that process, we learn a lot about the conditions facing the working class in those different parts of the world. We have also established partnerships with organizations like Peoples Dispatch and have been working very closely with PAT TV. We have also done some work with teleSUR in the past and hope to build on that collaboration at this conference.

I believe the key to our ability to defeat the crisis we are facing is to continue this work, to actually build these platforms, and to create this alternative for the majority of people. We are the majority; we should be the ones to dominate the narrative and should not be spending our time begging for air time from right-

wingers. Ultimately, that is what we should be striving for. I am grateful that we have the opportunity to do this and find solutions. I look forward to hearing from some of you about other ways we can deepen this interaction. When we leave this conference, we must strengthen these networks so that as we move into the future, it is the voice of the majority that dominates our media discourse and not the voice of the elite minority responsible for our suffering.

1.2.7 Developing Pan-African Communication in West African Popular Resistance

- Speaker: Kwesi Pratt

- Year: 2023

We are here to engage in a discussion that must ultimately lead to the shaping of a mechanism which enables us to be ourselves, to tell our own story, and to pursue our own interests. This gathering is a testament to our shared history and our ongoing struggle, a fight we have pursued in the past, continue today, and will pursue until final victory. I come from West Africa, which is a region comprising 16 countries. All these nations have suffered the devastating effects of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and are now in the midst of new colonial exploitation and oppression. West Africa is one of the richest regions in the world, containing everything from dense tropical forests to abundant uranium, gold, oil, and gas. The region is crisscrossed by rivers and bordered in the south by the Atlantic Ocean. Yet, despite these riches and the brilliance of our people, many cannot afford a daily meal, and many have no access to education or healthcare.

The problem we face today is not a lack of resources but an inability to control our own resources and tell our own stories. This is why we created the Pan-African Television project, a collective initiative of Pan-Africanists and revolutionaries. It is a humble effort, but it is one that we are very proud of. As we were planning this initiative, we realized that we are not the first to embark on such a journey. In the 1960s, our great leaders, Kwame Nkrumah, Sékou Touré, and Modibo Keita, established a media organization called the Pan-African News Agency, with a vision to connect us and tell our story. Unfortunately, it died shortly after it was born. We are here today to revive that initiative and fulfill the dreams of our forefathers.

We are establishing this media institution because we believe that unless we tell our own story, unless we become the subjects of our own history, we will not be able to overcome our problems as Africans. We are reminded of the final resolution of the 5th Pan-African Congress, which was held in Manchester, which ended with the slogan: "Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains." We are in the process of uniting the workers of the world, as dictated by that final resolution. We have won major battles before and we continue to win major battles today, and we shall continue to win battles in the future. But that depends on our creativity.

Many speakers before us have spoken about the Western media's extensive involvement in the propaganda war in Africa. The British Broadcasting Corporation

spends in excess of six billion pounds a year to promote the Western agenda. Voice of America is present throughout Africa. France 24, and Al Jazeera, are all promoting that same agenda. We don't have six billion pounds to spend, but we have a commitment to a struggle we dare not abandon. That commitment is what we need to use to defeat them. We also have a rich history of struggle against slavery and colonialism, and a rich history of attempting to unite as a people. That is how we defeated them in the past. We defeated them yesterday, we are defeating them today, and we will defeat them in the future.

This meeting with you is a very important step. We, as revolutionaries, as fighters for freedom, as Pan-Africanists, must come together as a family of media institutions to tell the truth. There are many media organizations that are already in this struggle. In Latin America, there is teleSUR, and in Russia, there is RT (Russia Today). There are also other media organizations like Press TV and Brasil de Fato. In Brazil, there is also TVT (Televisão dos Trabalhadores), and of course, in China, we have CGTN (China Global Television Network). We must also recognize the efforts of People's Dispatch, an international media organization that reports on people's movements around the globe. This is a battle for the minds of people everywhere, and the struggle to win their hearts is our collective responsibility.

1.3 Latin America's Information Warfare and the Southern Alliance

1.3.1 Media Reform Practices Amidst Latin America's Progressive Wave in the Early 21st Century

• Speaker: Manuel Bertoldi

• Year: 2023

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished teachers, fellow students, and friends of the people, good afternoon! It is a profound honor to take part in this significant forum, where we gather to reflect on an issue of vital importance to the future of humanity. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to East China Normal University, the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies, the Center for International Communication and Research of the CCP Party School, and the Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research for their invitation.

Why is the issue we are discussing today so critical? Because it concerns how we can win the hearts and minds of people to create the world we aspire to build based on the values of unity and equality.

Today, we need to reflect on the role of the media in the modern history of Latin America. I will begin with a telling example of how media outlets are engaged in class struggle in the contemporary era. Then, I will present two case studies that illustrate both progress and setbacks in the struggle to democratize access to information. Finally, I will reflect specifically on the challenges confronting mass media today.

Allow me to set the stage with a reference to a historic moment. In 1998, Fidel Castro addressed the 7th Congress of the Young Communist League in Cuba. In that momentous speech, he captured the essence of the class struggle with striking clarity: "The struggle we are discussing is fundamentally an ideological struggle. It will not become a war. Nuclear weapons cannot resolve the world's problems. That's not possible. Nor can wars provide solutions. Indeed, I would argue that even an isolated revolution is insufficient. In an order shaped by neoliberal globalization, an isolated revolution can be overturned in a matter of days, or at most, weeks."

That is what Castro told the leaders of the Cuban Young Communist League. The speech was broadcast publicly on television and radio. At that time, Cuba was undergoing a period of profound difficulty imposed by isolation and economic blockade. Castro had already foreseen the challenges sweeping across Latin America, warning: "Even under these conditions, we must never let our guard down. If people's disappointment in the current government leads to the rise of fascist or

far-right groups, it could thrust us back into the past. Nor can we exclude the possibility of military aggression. Yet, above all, our present struggle is an ideological struggle." In closing, he clearly pointed out one of the Cuban Revolution's greatest strengths: "Its success stemmed from its ability to sow ideas."

In that year, that is, 1998, resistance to neoliberalism had spread throughout the continent. Popular uprisings emerged in countries such as Ecuador and Venezuela. That same year, Commander Chávez, elected as a champion of the people, won the presidential election. The victory paved the way for a series of electoral triumphs across various nations. Argentina faced widespread popular uprisings in late 2001, while Mr. Lula secured his first presidential term in Brazil in 2002. The resistance has steadily intensified alongside the growing momentum of popular mobilization. The year 2005 marked a turning point for Latin America with the demise of the FTAA, followed by the elections of Evo Morales in Bolivia, Correa in Ecuador, Lugo in Paraguay, and Zelaya in Honduras as presidents. However, amidst these successes, there exist pockets of tension, conflict, and discontent.

All these new governments share a common challenge: they operate within countries where the media landscape is heavily centralized, dominated by a few economic entities with a clear ideological bias against socialist principles. In response to this reality, governments have had to amend existing communication laws or enact new ones. Venezuela, under President Chávez, emerged as a leading force in the integration of Latin America, supported by the administrations of Brazil's Lula and Argentina's Kirchner. The collapse of the FTAA in 2005 catalyzed the formation of key integration mechanisms like the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, the Union of South American Nations, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States recently established.

The pivotal events of 2002 not only shaped the Bolívar process but also Latin America, marked by the failed coup in Venezuela. This period saw 49 significant governmental measures, of which five were the most important, including the Land Law, the Hydrocarbon Law, the Education Law, the Coast Law, and the Fisheries Law, directly challenging the interests of former power holders in Venezuela. Media outlets played a critical role during these events, with television programs, broadcasting corporations, and major private media entities aligning against Chávez's reforms, fostering conditions for the coup attempt to overturn Chávez's administration on April 11, 2002. These media outlets distorted and undermined Chávez's message to the Venezuelan people, which reals their tactics to a certain extent. On the other they have papered over the Venezuelan people's practice of direct democracy. There have been numerous large-scale demonstrations aimed at restoring the constitution and freeing the president from house arrest.

On Thursday, April 11, the proprietors of five private channels, namely Venevisión, Radio Caracas Televisión, Globovisión, Televen, and CMT, along with nine of the top 10 international newspapers, such as Universal, Nacional, Tal Cual, El Impulso, and El Nuevo País, actively engaged in anti-Chavez activities. Print media outlets were also involved. An editorial in the El País on April 13 characterized the protests, spearheaded by entrepreneurs and the military, as a form of "civil resistance." They demanded the dissolution of democratic institutions, ransacked the Cuban embassy, and assaulted Chávez's ministers. Similarly, an editorial in the El Mundo on April 13 portrayed these actions as manifestations of "public outrage." In stark contrast, those advocating for the reinstatement of the constitutional presidency and the preservation of democratic institutions post-coup were disparagingly labeled as "mobs" or "mentally unstable demonstrators." This was featured in the April 15 edition of the El País.

The struggle for a progressive wave in Latin America hinges significantly on garnering public support, with one critical battleground being the media landscape. Argentina's 2010 Media Law upholds communication right as a human right, curtails media monopolies, grants licenses to mass media outlets, and upholds viewers' rights. This has played a pivotal role in democratizing and legitimizing media discourse. It marks a departure from the media landscape following Argentina's return to democracy in 1983. The first draft of the legislation was publicly heard across the countries and made aware of by the media system after months of deliberations, compelling the political system to address an uncomfortable issue, particularly given its growing reliance on mass media. Notably, the law's most profound impact was challenging the prevailing notion that journalism had lost its independence. This is the major culture shock that this process produces.

Following the law's passage in Congress, the country's leading media conglomerate, Clarín, immediately filed a lawsuit for non-compliance with this law. Amidst persistent conflicts and divergent interests, the nation has not exhibited the same acumen in radio management and licensing decisions as it once did. The Media Law stands as a testament to the deeper transformations instigated by clashes between social factions guided by Kirchner and the dominant agricultural sector. It should be viewed as a product of a time marked by the rise of political forces opposing neoliberal vision, gaining momentum following Argentina's tumultuous 2001-2002 crisis and subsequent uprisings. Ten years later, amidst the enduring wave of neoliberalism, the country finds itself grappling with another crisis.

As soon as Mauricio Macri's government took power in 2015, it issued a decree pinpointing crucial aspects of the law and, with congressional backing, the

government effectively achieved its intent. He intervened in the communication landscape to ensure profitability for major economic entities and relax constraints on media consolidation.

In Ecuador, a grand movement unfolded against a backdrop of media-government tensions. In the 2011 referendum, Ecuadorians overwhelmingly voted to curb media consolidation and economic influences on media operations. Two years later in 2013, the National Congress, buoyed by public support, enacted the Organization Law, which regulates news content across all media platforms. This legislation provides that information is not to be exploited for commercial purposes but should be regarded as a public good, a non-commercial service untainted by privileges favoring select economic elites.

Furthermore, it stresses that news content ought to elevate civic engagement, foster diversity and inclusion, and uphold journalistic objectivity. In 2021, Guillermo Lasso was elected as president. Just one month later, he submitted a bill to the National Assembly, proposing substantial amendments to laws promulgated during the Correa administration. This new legislation deprived the public of right to information. In short, it is driven by a philosophy of market self-regulation, defining freedom of speech as an individual right rather than a collective one.

This institutional battle took place against the backdrop of the social and political backlash against neoliberalism that swept Latin America in the 1990s. By that time, significant experience, particularly in the field of communications, had been accumulated, establishing a precedent for later national or even international conflict planning. It was perhaps from the Bolivarian Revolution of the early 21st century that a new instrument for the era emerged: teleSUR. It is co-sponsored by several Latin American governments. For years, we have worked to accumulate the grassroots communication experiences that Latin American countries have developed despite limited resources and technological constraints. Last year, we gathered in Brazil with over 60 Latin American mass media outlets to develop a common strategy aligned with the needs and visions of our civil organizations. Supported by teleSUR and other sister organizations, we coordinated joint training programs.

As communication tools transform with the rise of new social networks and digital platforms, there is an urgent need to reopen the debate on communication strategies. Worldwide, discussions about regulating Big Tech are gaining momentum. The rise of artificial intelligence has made the regulation of social networks an increasingly urgent issue. This includes regulating both economic actors and controlling access to public discourse. Many of the world's most

influential corporations are now involved in the media landscape, where they often manipulate or censor information to serve private interests.

Mass media organizations have been advocating for advertisement legislation that would include both national and international entities in advertising distribution channels and mandate them to pay for making advertisements. Despite traditional media's strong emphasis on market efficiency and their resistance to state intervention, their operations remain heavily dependent on approvals from domestic institutions. Furthermore, there remains a significant lack of discussion around public media, which currently operate far below their potential capacity. During the years of the neoliberal government, these media were all dismantled, making their reconstruction crucial. Any effective strategy must actively include both public media workers and civil society organizations.

Finally, we face the essential task of crafting our own narratives and our own stories. Today's dominant cultural discourse claims that the end of capitalism is harder to imagine than the end of the world. How do we respond to such narratives? What stories should we tell, and from which perspectives? Where do we find hope? These questions are central to shaping our communication strategies. That is why we consider it both a great honor and a unique opportunity to be here in China, reflecting on these questions together. We believe that as China sharing its experience with the peoples of the Global South in the practice of people-centered governance, we will find the key to the future of humanity.

1.3.2 The State and Prospects of Latin American Media's International Communication

- Speaker: Patricia Villegas

- Year: 2023

Good afternoon, everyone. My sincere thanks to the conference organizer for the kind invitation. I'm Patricia from Cali, Colombia.

Eighteen years ago, I arrived in Venezuela to join what was then a pioneering initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean team at teleSUR. At that time, not even the formal project proposal for teleSUR had been drafted. It was clear that teleSUR was more than just a Venezuelan television channel, it embodied a vision for our entire region: Latin America and the Caribbean. Since its launch in 2005, one distinctive feature has defined teleSUR: it is a truly multinational broadcaster in LAC. This identity shapes our editorial perspective. We see information as a fundamental right. Just as the people across Latin America and the Caribbean have taken to the streets to demand greater access to education, healthcare, and food, so too have they advocated, and should continue to do so, for truthful information that reflects the realities of their lives.

It was the vision of a multinational television network for Latin America and the Caribbean that led to the establishment of teleSUR in 2005, founded through the support of several sponsoring states. These sponsoring states are Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Bolivia. Over the past 18 years since the establishment of teleSUR, each of the four states has faced unrelenting attacks. Over these years, three of the sponsoring states have experienced lockdowns, economic sanctions, and resource exploitation. One, Bolivia, even experienced a coup, which we will return to shortly.

It is no coincidence that these countries came together to create teleSUR. **These nations have persisted in the belief that communication is not a commodity, but a fundamental human right, a form of public power.**

teleSUR was launched on July 24, a date chosen deliberately, for it marks the birthday of the great Liberator, Simón Bolívar. This symbolic choice reflects our vision for Latin America and the Caribbean. We are a channel created by the people of this region, for the people of this region. This is central to our identity: only those who are part of Latin America and the Caribbean can truly tell its stories. We know these events. We live these experiences. We understand these narratives. That is why we provide not only the news, but also the context behind it. This is what is absent in Western media companies: they report events quickly and efficiently, but too often fail to explain why they matter.

In what feels like a blink, eighteen years have passed, yet it is an extended period for us. We began as a Spanish-language television and have since expanded to include an English-language channel, primarily for audiences across Africa. Today, through our partnership with StarSat, a Chinese signal distribution provider, we deliver our content to 33 African countries.

As you know, we began as a Spanish-language television channel. But over time, we have evolved into a multimedia platform delivering content in both Spanish and English. That means learning to tell the stories of our region in both languages, on all platforms, in all forms. It sounds simple to say, but in practice, it's a tremendous challenge. And it's one I believe media professionals around the world, including everyone here, can deeply understand.

Where do we broadcast our content? This map (note: refer to the video) may have been put together quickly, but the distribution network behind it is the result of immense effort. Each of these points represents a place where teleSUR's signal can be received. Our content is accessible across a range of platforms: through open signals in some regions, satellite TV in others, and IPTV in many more.

Our strategy is simple: we aim to be present on every possible platform. Whenever an operator, no matter how small, approaches us wanting to carry teleSUR, we work to make our signal available to them. This approach has been critical. Despite crackdowns, lockdowns, and censorship, teleSUR continues to reach audiences worldwide. For example, when Mauricio Macri's government took power in Argentina, they removed teleSUR from the major operators. Yet, Argentines still found ways to watch us. Now, teleSUR has returned to open digital television in Argentina, and our online viewership has grown. This has been a meaningful experience for us. Even when some channels were taken down or censored, our diverse distribution structure ensured we remained on air and on screen.

So, what is the history of teleSUR? As I mentioned earlier, we were launched on July 24, 2005. But it was our coverage of the coup in Honduras that truly brought us to the world's attention. Honduras has also recently established diplomatic relations with China at multiple levels. We showed the world a coup was happening through live broadcasts, we revealed the shooting at the home of former Honduran President Zelaya and his forced transfer to Costa Rica, still in his pajamas. This was not, as CNN Español and other Western media companies suggested, a peaceful transfer of power. Their narrative attempted to obscure the truth and justify the coup.

teleSUR's live coverage from the presidential palace was pivotal. **We do not construct narratives, nor do we replace one story with another. We show the**

reality of the moment, and that truth is what matters most to the people of Latin America and the Caribbean.

When we traveled to Libya to report on events that were being covered by other media outlets, many Western journalists asked us: "What is teleSUR doing here?" They even challenged our presence, questioning why teleSUR would report events there. Their underlying message was clear: "Stick to covering Latin America and the Caribbean. Why come to the other side of the world?"

We went to Africa because we wanted to understand what was truly happening, and because behind these events lies a broader media war. These were among the first images to reach our news center in Caracas, and others around the world. Yet not every media organization was committed to uncovering the full reality. When our reporter, along with other journalists, flew into Tripoli, only our reporter stepped off the plane. The rest was reluctant to disembark and eventually returned home. With a live camera in hand, our reporter broadcast directly from Green Square in Tripoli. He called me and said, "Patricia, the square hasn't been bombed. There are children playing football here." I replied, "That can't be. The images we're seeing here in Caracas tells a completely different story. Go live immediately. Show me what's really happening." When teleSUR began transmitting live images of children playing football in Green Square, the reaction was one of disbelief. Many accused us of lying. But under live broadcast conditions, that simply wasn't possible.

How does the media war actually work? We are living through a constant explosion of information, a tsunami of images, and messages transmitted in countless languages. But remember: more information does not automatically mean more knowledge. teleSUR's success over the years stems from our commitment to going beyond the newsroom and deep into the field. It is only by being on the ground that we can truly grasp what is happening. We send trained, skilled professionals who use live broadcasting to attract viewers and report the reality.

Years later, external service providers in the UK finally admitted that the so-called "bombing of the square"—the image distributed to media outlets worldwide, that is, the one we previously saw—never actually occurred. There remains no evidence to support that it was real. History, in time, revealed the truth. Despite being doubted, we broadcast live from Green Square in Tripoli, where we showed children playing football.

Yet, while the media war was vital, it was not the only factor behind teleSUR's success over the years. I can see how this moves the Argentines in the audience, and it moves me as well, even though I am not Argentine. One of the most meaningful

endeavors teleSUR has undertaken in the past 18 years was our collaboration with Diego Maradona. Many people asked me, "Patricia, how can you possibly work with Maradona? Is he difficult to get along with... you can't just approach him." But we overcame those so-called "impossibilities," and this photo is a testament to that. It was taken during the World Cup in Russia, though our partnership with Diego began back at the World Cup in Brazil. Had he still been with us, I am certain we would have reunited at the World Cup in Qatar. But we had to say goodbye to him far too soon, mourning not only a football icon but a political symbol. His firm decision to collaborate with Latin American and Caribbean public television was a powerful statement to the world: Maradona stood with teleSUR. And if you wanted to know the World Cup through a different lens, you needed to watch teleSUR.

That opened many doors for us. What does that mean? It means that our history isn't defined solely by conflict. Human experiences are diverse. I'm often asked how we cover Africa. Well, Africa, too, is profoundly diverse. Yet in our media coverage, we often focus only on problems, only on difficulties, only on mountains yet to be climbed. And that is a mistake. There is also football, a powerful global unifier, and an essential part of popular culture throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. It brings me back to our interview with President Evo Morales, who is also a great football player.

These moments of unity happen time and again, and teleSUR plays a key role in sharing them with the world. Many remember this picture showing the attempted invasion of Venezuela from the Colombian border. In fact, the current President of Colombia recently confirmed that there was indeed a real plan under the government of Iván Duque to militarily invade Venezuela. That was one of the most challenging stories we have ever covered. The disparity in resources between the two sides was stark, and we had very little equipment. Yet with what we had, we broadcast live to the world, showing that the trucks allegedly carrying humanitarian aid into Venezuela were not set on fire by Venezuelans rejecting aid.

Months later, The New York Times corroborated this account. But we told the story in real time. For us, the lesson is clear: people are ready to believe the truth, but only after Western media companies report it. Yet again, we reported this story live from the ground, just as we did during the 2009 coup in Honduras. Unfortunately, the history of Latin America remains marked by coups, a reality we witnessed once again in Bolivia. teleSUR's correspondents have, in recent years, become some of the most experienced in covering such upheavals across the region. We were there when President Evo Morales, in his final address as leader, bid farewell to his people and offered to step down voluntarily to prevent further bloodshed. That video was

broadcast on teleSUR. These stories of the people, their struggles, and the restoration of democracy have become classical narratives on our channel.

This is further verified by the recent attempted assassination of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, the former president and current vice-president of Argentina. The attack was widely covered by local media and triggered international outrage and quick response, which can be partly attributed to teleSUR's live reporting of the event.

Shifting to another ongoing conflict: the war in Europe has dominated almost all of our discussions today. We have a team in Kyiv, another in Donbas, and tragically, one of our correspondents in Donbas was injured while reporting. Maintaining teams on different sides of the conflict allows us to present a more nuanced, complex view of what is truly happening. **One of the central tactics in media war is to portray everything in black and white, much like the colors of my clothes. But life isn't that simple. We all know life is filled with colors. To convey that richness in our storytelling requires complex views, not the oversimplified, good-versus-bad narrative that often defines media war.**

Another tactic is the omission of truth. What struck me in this case was how the news can hide reality. Ukrainian soldiers livestreamed a moment in which a Russian soldier's mother was made to watch her son being killed. Western media companies have remained largely silent about these tragic events, yet they are very much part of this conflict. Amid the explosion of information that accompanies war, certain images remain unseen. They don't capture widespread attention because the media tends to focus on hotspots, which eventually cool down and fade from view. That's why public understanding of the war in Europe today is not as sufficient as it was when the conflict first "erupted". As many know, this war began years ago.

Despite Europe's dominance over global information flows, Josep Borrell has admitted that Europe is not winning the narrative battle. Why? There lies our opportunity. And that's exactly why we report live from the ground. People's trust in Western media companies is declining. They are growing skeptical and increasingly turning to alternative sources of information.

When the conflict broke out, the number of European users on teleSUR's English-language channel surged dramatically. Why? Because Russia Today (RT) was banned, and audiences could no longer access its content. People turned to us in search of another perspective. This demonstrates a real opportunity, even amid the continued dominance of major Western media companies.

Now, turning to the latest news from Latin America: another president has faced a coup. In this coup, legislation was whitewashed, lives were lost. Without teleSUR and other alternative media outlets, these deaths might have gone unreported. This is where we prove our value: Each outlet amplifies the impact of the others.

"It's in Ecuador." Amid the strikes, this is the message left by Ecuadorans on the streets. Government theft, media deception, killing by the police, football the unifier, and open opportunity, are all topics of our reports. We covered the World Cup in Qatar. Why do I bring this up? I'm aware that time is short. But the Qatar World Cup offered us a unique opportunity to collaborate with Eastern Caribbean nations. It allowed us to explore new ways to drive growth and broaden the reach of our content. This program we produced is aired on TVT, Brazil's workers' television station, and distributed via teleSUR's signals. Although the original language was Portuguese, we translate it into Spanish and broadcast it on our Spanish channel. We also have a Portuguese-speaking news presenter on social media. So even without a dedicated Portuguese channel, teleSUR still speaks Portuguese.

Of course, the challenges we face are shared by many alternative media outlets. How do we set our own agenda rather than blindly follow Western media companies' narratives? How do we collaborate with local and global media, and social, political, and cultural actors to create meaningful content you attempt to present?

This diagram offers a useful model for producing what we call "liquid content", content that stays true to the stories we believe in and that is distributed across platforms. We are also building a coalition of political warning media channels to advance an anti-hegemonic agenda. This includes providing professional training for journalists and content producers, because in our region, most universities fail to train journalists to see reality from alternative perspectives. That's why teleSUR has taken on a training role to foster experience-sharing, content exchange, and co-creation, which we see as vital for the future.

Our Chinese audience may recognize this image. A few years ago, we collaborated with a Spanish-language channel in China on a cultural program that aired on both channels. We also launched the column "In the Crosshairs" with RT en Español, produced an energy program with HispanTV (the Spanish-language channel of Iran's PressTV), and partnered with Al Mayadeen in Lebanon on a show called "Truth".

Most recently, we signed a significant agreement with BRICS TV channels. Now, content from teleSUR' TV channels, website, Instagram account, and other social media accounts is translated into Russian and Portuguese and shared across BRICS TV channels, dramatically expanding our influence. Through alliances with public

broadcasters across Latin America and the Caribbean, we've enabled content sharing and distribution on the websites I've just introduced among members. This has helped establish teleSUR as a national-level media brand throughout the region. Whenever major events occur in the region, people turn to teleSUR, and that is the impact we have built over the past 18 years. Thank you very much.

1.3.3 Manufacturing Chaos: From Social Media to Politics

- Speaker: Nina Fideles

- Year: 2023

Good afternoon. I'll be opening this workshop in Portuguese. Thank you to our interpreters for making this possible. It is both an honor and a pleasure to open this afternoon's session with what we in Brazil call a "mística", a moment rich in cultural meaning. As we've seen throughout the various processes discussed, this "mística" underscores not only the vital role of culture in times of revolution, but also the power of communication — particularly through radio, a medium that remains deeply influential across Brazil and Latin America.

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to East China Normal University for the invitation, and to the entire organizing team for their dedicated efforts. It is truly valuable that they have put together such a high-quality forum, providing us with the opportunity to engage in enriching discussions. We ought to place communication at the heart of our dialogs on political processes. After all, we are addressing issues of political and ideological domination, which forms the very foundation for building and sustaining a political and ideological culture rooted in the working class.

It is both a privilege and a profound responsibility to share with you some of the insights, experiences, and reflections from Brazil—and particularly from Brasil de Fato—regarding our efforts in the field of communication. We reflect within a broader vision: to confront the challenges posed by social media and examine the impact of both traditional and digital media frameworks on Brazilian politics.

I can affirm that reflecting on and practicing journalism within the current context of hybrid warfare presents a significant challenge. Many regions around the world are subject to hybrid warfare of varying intensities, often correlated with the level of threat these regions are perceived to pose. We are witnessing political instability, threats to democracy, erosion of democratic institutions, and public opinion inflamed by hatred, violence, and a widespread rejection of politics. This negative climate tends to condemn all political conduct as culpable. In light of this, it is essential that we find ways to overcome the rejection of politics, restore a sense of political agency to the people, and empower them to make a difference.

Communication has always sought to secure narrative hegemony using various tools. However, with the emergence of social networks and modern communication techniques, these means have evolved in both form and scale, gaining the power to even manipulate public sentiment. My aim today is to shed light on how these

means operate within the specific context of Brazil. To provide a clearer understanding, I would like to outline the situation that unfolded in Brazil.

It was this event that paved the way for the election of former President Bolsonaro. It began in 2013, when a small group of activists demonstrating for free public transport took to the streets of São Paulo, the nation's economic hub, to protest against rising transit fares.

The police crackdown that followed sparked outrage, prompting millions across Brazil to join demonstrations in cities nationwide. Seizing the opportunity, right-wing groups infiltrated the protests, muddying the waters and harnessing the momentum to serve their own agenda. What started as a localized movement rapidly expanded into a nationwide wave of unrest. The right wing adopted symbolic gestures and co-opted methodologies associated with the left.

A new political landscape was emerging, exposing the crisis of traditional governing approaches long upheld by the old establishment. I would like to highlight two key elements that characterized these demonstrations: First, a widespread rejection of the Brazilian left wing and its traditional agenda. The Workers' Party government had implemented affirmative action policies, such as the Family Support Program, which provided cash benefits to low-income families, and the introduction of racial quotas in university admissions. These policies were critical, even serving as necessary corrections to historical inequities, yet they faced intense backlash. The second element was resistance to gender and race-related agendas, driven largely by ethical and religious convictions.

It was the convergence of these two elements that helped unite right-wing groups. The growing influence of conservatives and economic liberals fueled the rise of far-right rhetoric. As this ideology gained traction, even the Workers' Party, the largest left-wing party in Brazil and across Latin America, came under intensified attack. At the same time, segments of the traditional right-wing apparatus also found themselves significantly weakened. The entire political chessboard was shifting, and the pieces began to move accordingly.

In 2014, Dilma Rousseff was re-elected for a second term— an electoral process that fraught with peril and instability. Opinion polls illustrate showed that the support for her reached an all-time high of 79% in March 2013, only to plummet to 31% following the mass demonstrations in June of that year. By August 2015, almost a year after her re-election, her support had collapsed to just 8%. The crisis continued to escalate, culminating in a coup in 2016. This was not solely a political crisis; it was also profoundly economic, unfolding at a time when Dilma was suspended from office.

During the subsequent two years, public policies were drastically dismantled. The extensive network of organizations, institutions, and systems built by the Workers' Party over recent years collapsed, and former President Lula became the target of relentless political persecution. Who, then, should be held accountable for Lula's imprisonment and the coup? The answer is the judiciary, parliament, and the corporate press. Each of them contributed momentum and played a critical role in these events.

In 2018, Mr. Lula was arrested as part of the so-called "Operation Car Wash." This represents a textbook case of lawfare, the strategic use of legal systems to eliminate political opponents of the ruling class. The case was riddled with legal absurdities that drew attention from around the world.

No one exemplifies this judicial manipulation more vividly than Judge Sergio Moro. Remember that name. It was Moro who presided over the blatantly one-sided trial of Lula, all under the guise of an anti-corruption campaign.

His ties to the U.S. Department of State and the FBI are close. Judge Moro, along with other members of the Brazilian Federal Police and judiciary, participated in seminars co-organized with U.S. agencies, such as the "The Bridges Project," which aimed to strengthen bilateral law enforcement cooperation and provide counter-terrorism trainings. In ordering Lula's arrest, Moro embraced classic U.S. tactics: mass judicial violations and the arbitrary use of law to achieve the widespread conviction of government officials and a severe distortion of the legal system.

Yet this kind of interference is hardly new. Throughout Latin American history, the U.S. government has repeatedly supported authoritarian regimes.

Brazil has been in a state of turmoil ever since Lula was imprisoned. It was this climate of instability that paved the way for Bolsonaro's presidential victory in 2018, under the slogan "Brazil above everything, God above everyone." This phrase came to symbolize a far-right vision of Brazil, and a far-right interpretation of God. Under this administration, opposition parties, free speech, religious diversity, and protests were suppressed. Pluralism was rejected, and the nation became increasingly engulfed in violence, hate speech, and disinformation.

The values Bolsonaro embodies are not new. Having spent 27 years in political life, he was already notorious for his incendiary rhetoric. Throughout his four-year term, he openly dismissed scientific expertise, rejected vaccines, and expressed support for torture, even the elimination of political opponents. Bolsonaro bears direct responsibility for more than 700,000 deaths in Brazil during the COVID-19

pandemic. Remember Judge Moro? Bolsonaro later appointed him as the Minister of Justice.

Forty minutes is far too short a time to fully explain everything Brazil has endured as a result of Bolsonaro's reckless policies. But it is crucial to understand that when there are attempts to manipulate or redirect a country's political course, one common strategy is to foster an environment of distrust and instability, precisely because such conditions become fertile ground for the spread of fake news.

Today, Professor Wang Hui's presentation on the five monopolies offered valuable insights into these dynamics.

Bolsonaro's Election and Its Consequences

In Brazil, voting is compulsory. During the 2018 elections, out of 147 million eligible voters, 116 million cast their ballots. Bolsonaro secured victory with over 55% of the valid votes, meaning approximately 57 million Brazilians voted for him. How did such a candidate garner such widespread support?

Bolsonaro's campaign team successfully propelled him into office through the automated dissemination of viral messages containing false information. Investigative reporting by Brazilian media has uncovered aspects of this scheme, exposing an extensive network of private companies involved in the effort. These entities financed large-scale disinformation campaigns against the Workers' Party, primarily through platforms like WhatsApp. Contracts linked to the spread of disinformation during the 2018 election amounted to more than \$5 million. These actions were illegal as they compromised the integrity of the electoral process, manipulated public opinion, and inflicted damage on democracy.

However, at its core, for information to truly resonate with people, it relies primarily on sentimental manipulation. If a message fails to capture attention, further amplification is futile. This is not merely a structural issue; it is also a question of delivery. Indeed, such sentimental manipulation is neither a novel strategy nor unique to social media. Throughout history, hasn't nearly every major successful war gained legitimacy through the skillful manipulation of public sentiment? Whether it was the fear of communism, nuclear weapons, the loss of freedom, or the loss of private property, these narratives have long been used to justify action.

The culture industry consistently engages in the manipulation of public sentiment. A telling example is the 1974 documentary *Hearts and Minds*, which examines the Vietnam War and reveals how the U.S. government and political actors employed manipulation techniques to shape popular perception. Information that could have

damaged the war's image or questioned its legitimacy was suppressed, while the Vietnamese were portrayed as brutal and implacable enemies—all to stoke patriotism. This practice remains a recurring theme within the cultural industry: the systematic demonization of communists, Russians, Vietnamese, Palestinians, native Americans, Chinese, and others. Who becomes the target of demonization depends not on principle, but on whose interests are being served.

In the case of Brazil, the fears of the people were unmistakable. During the 2018 election, a flood of fake news circulated, much of it so absurd that it's difficult to put into words. Yet its impact was undeniably decisive in shaping the electoral outcome.

In his book *The Engineers of Chaos*, Italian author Giuliano da Empoli examines the phenomenon of social networks and the ways in which technology can amplify political marketing. The author analyzes case studies ranging from Trump's 2016 presidential campaign to the Brexit referendum, demonstrating how the fusion of psychology, technology, and communication can sway public opinion, destabilize democracies, and manipulate voter intentions.

From a psychological perspective, the author explains that sentimental manipulation on social networks is a technique designed to tap into and direct collective sentiment. By engaging users with messages, images, and videos that trigger intense emotions, such as anger, fear, sadness, and joy, political actors can transform individuals into a unified non-political community.

Da Empoli further emphasizes that such technology not only manipulates public sentiment through social networks, but also enables the collection and analysis of vast amounts of user data, including interests, preferences, behaviors, and emotions. He names to the technology "engineers of chaos," capable of crafting highly personalized messages that resonate deeply with individuals. Consequently, major tech platforms have built ecosystems that are directly complicit in distorting electoral outcomes and manipulating voter sentiments across numerous countries.

Fake news distributed via social networks also plays a crucial role in this process, as fear and hatred often take root through lies. A study from Indiana University revealed that false stories are 70% more likely to be shared than factual reporting. In essence, these "engineers of chaos" polarize public opinion through the spread of disinformation.

The Cycle of Hatred

During Bolsonaro's years in power, fear increasingly turned into hatred, a sentiment that spread far beyond social media. For many reasons, inflammatory rhetoric permeated public life and violence became a daily reality.

According to data from the Brazilian Army, Bolsonaro's administration issued over 900,000 firearm registration permits to gun collectors and hunters throughout his four-year term, averaging 691 certificates per day. This normalization of violence led to new victims emerging daily. The situation grew especially severe during the election period, which was marked by a continuous surge in incidents of political violence. Behind these developments lay a clear agenda: the freedom to own a gun in turn generates substantial profits for the weapons industry.

After losing the popular vote, Bolsonaro retreated from the public eye and departed for the United States. His refusal to concede defeat and persistent efforts to discredit Brazil's electoral system laid the groundwork for the event that followed. Bolsonaro's supporters gained influence in several provincial capitals, colluding with military police and segments of the mainstream media. On January 8, a massive crowd stormed into the Congress, the highest symbol of our democratic institutions and the people's will. This event serves as a grim, almost apocalyptic echo of the 2021 U.S. Capitol attack and stands as a historic humiliation for Brazil.

We have also witnessed a wave of violent attacks targeting public schools. In February, public schools across Brazil were struck by a series of threats and assaults that resulted in tragic casualties. I apologize for bringing this up right after lunch, but it's something that must be said. Two incidents, in particular, caused profound alarm and are especially hard to comprehend.

In one, a man broke into a nursery and killed four young children. In another, a student fatally stabbed a teacher in his seventies. Why mention such grim events? To underscore that beyond the swirl of social media, there are real issues.

In response, our Ministry of Justice, under the leadership of its minister, launched Operation Safe School. Within just ten days, nearly 300 individuals were arrested. The ministry is investigating 1,224 threats nationwide, and 694 adolescents have been brought in for questioning.

Recognizing the risk of further violence, media outlets quickly agreed not to disclose the identities or images of the perpetrators. It became clear that closed groups on social networks and messaging apps were spreading false information aimed at instigating panic. This led many schools to close, and left parents afraid to send their children to class.

Official surveys have revealed that a number of individuals have referenced Bolsonaro or even neo-Nazi ideology in their social media posts, a disturbing trend that has become increasingly entrenched in Brazil in recent years. Anthropologist Adriana Dias, in her study entitled *Observing Hate*, outlines striking parallels between global neo-Nazi networks and right-wing movements in Brazil.

Dias is renowned for her in-depth investigations and successful infiltration of neo-Nazi groups within the country. In 2021, for instance, she scoured multiple neo-Nazi websites and uncovered a letter signed by Bolsonaro back in 2004— evidence that indicates the connection between Bolsonarism and the promotion of neo-Nazi ideology.

Her research has mapped approximately 530 neo-Nazi extremist centers across Brazil, involving an estimated 10,000 individuals. This reflects an alarming increase of 270.6% from January 2019 to May 2021. She also emphasizes that although these centers were once largely concentrated in the south, they have now spread throughout the entire country.

In Brazil, major tech companies are also being held accountable for their role in the interconnected spread of violence, Bolsonarism, far-right extremism, and neo-Nazi ideologies.

Minister of Justice Flávio Dino demanded that Twitter adopt a stricter approach to content promoting school attacks and remove all accounts disseminating violent material. Although Twitter initially attempted to distance itself from responsibility, Flávio escalated his rhetoric with a threat to suspend the platform's operations across Brazil. This pressure ultimately led Twitter to remove hundreds of accounts linked to the abuse of children and adolescents.

However, the situation remains unresolved. The Congress is currently reviewing a bill aimed at regulating social media platforms— a highly contentious issue that has, so far, stalled progress. At its core, the bill seeks to hold the platforms legally responsible for content that incites violence and contains hate speech. In the words of President Lula: Major tech companies have "normalized the absurd," and the corporations that control social media are profiting from the spread of fake news, hate speech, and the promotion of weapons.

Meta, the parent company of Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, immediately voiced opposition to the proposed bill, claiming it contravenes existing Brazilian legislation. Google also joined the criticism, inserting a banner at the bottom of its webpages stating: "The Fake News bill could make it harder for Brazilians to

distinguish truth from falsehood." Such statements come from these companies, how ironic is that?

Beyond publicly stating their positions, these platforms have the ability to limit the visibility of content that supports the bill. Amid pressure from tech giants and lobbying by Bolsonaro's allies, the bill has faced significant obstacles in moving forward in Brazil. Their argument remains consistent: regulating social media amounts to censorship and resembles authoritarian measures that suppress free speech.

It is clear that the far-right is unwilling to relinquish an environment where it thrives and which helps maintain its influence. A study published this year revealed that far-right content was both more effective and efficient during the 2022 election cycle. Analysis of posts across multiple platforms shows that right-wing content not only achieved higher publication volumes but also attracted significantly more interaction than left-wing posts. Although left-wing posts were more numerous on some platforms, they received 40% less engagement compared to right-wing content.

I want to emphasize a crucial point here. Despite the Brazilian government's extensive efforts to re-elect Bolsonaro—deploying strategies, state agencies, the police, the military, and a wide range of institutional resources—nothing could prevent President Lula's victory. This triumph belongs to the Brazilian people, and it serves as a powerful sign that our efforts have not been in vain. I would also like to take this opportunity to make a brief public statement: Between September and October, during the presidential election, Brasil de Fato's content was shared and read over 150 million times online—on our website and across every platform where we publish. We are gradually finding our footing.

That said, President Lula still faces significant challenges in his third term, particularly when it comes to high-quality communication of national content.

Our Communication

I've been reflecting: what about our communication? What are we truly creating? Throughout history, humanity has developed diverse ways of producing and consuming information. These methods actively shape society. It's a continuous, iterative process. The time we invest and the manner in which we consume information directly influence how media companies produce content. This, in turn, affects the kinds of information we absorb and create.

Today's world population exceeds 8 billion people. Among them, there are 8.46 billion mobile phone users and 4.76 billion active social media users. In Brazil, the third most active country on social networks, 152 million out of approximately 210 million people are active internet users. The most popular platform is YouTube, with 96% penetration, followed by Instagram and Facebook.

As a left-wing media leader, I often find myself asking: What kind of content should we be disseminating to counter hate-driven narratives and political rejection? How can we build a broad base that enables us to both recognize and critique hegemonic behavior? My own political and professional formation began within village workers' organizations. For me, communication has always been a powerful catalyst for social transformation.

We must remember: the vast ecosystem of channels, platforms, and social networks is largely controlled by adversarial forces. They are determined to prevent us from reaching a broad audience at any cost. While we do not rely exclusively on these platforms, there is an urgent need to strategize our way out of this digital dependence. We must innovate now to pave the way for building our own alternatives in the future.

The traditional left-wing outlets often reach a predominantly male audience, one that is typically older, highly educated, and politically consistent. In contrast, Brasil de Fato has managed to break this mold by connecting with a great number of young women. This expansion is due in large part to our strategic social media operations, which are designed to attract users from these platforms and guide them to our own website. Most importantly, it must be stressed that a substantial portion of our web traffic is organic and direct. This demonstrates that our reach is not solely dependent on social platforms.

We are aware that global perceptions of Brazil are largely shaped by mainstream media narratives. That is precisely why we have taken the initiative to translate some of our reports into English and Spanish. These English-language reports are now reaching audiences who previously knew Brazil only through the lens of mainstream media outlets. It is essential for all of us to look beyond our own borders and share a fuller story of global struggles.

To me, this represents a crucial opportunity to engage new audiences and amplify counter-hegemonic narratives on a wider scale. That said, our success cannot be measured by numbers alone. What truly matters is the political impact of our content. While finding ways to assess political gain is important, it is also far more challenging.

I must admit, I don't have a ready-made answer either. I remain unconvinced that any single personal perspective can illuminate the way forward in such a complex reality. But I am certain of one thing: our true compass will always be class struggle. As the Brazilian writer Paulo Leminski states, "Every weapon in class struggle, be it a stone, the night, or a line of poetry, is a good weapon." That is why I believe our tools extend far beyond access to information. Art, culture, and spirituality are also vital tools that can help us overcome these profound challenges. They are essential to deepening our subjectivity and consciousness.

While I maintain a critical perspective toward some classic theories of journalism, I do not dismiss them outright when reflecting on left-wing communication. I believe journalistic methods can guide us toward the facts, help establish credibility, allow space for contradictory voices, stimulate meaningful discussions, and ultimately develop proposals that serve the working class.

That said, we must also understand the strategies employed by the far-right and their skill in manipulating public sentiment. As powerful as these strategies may seem, we must neither emulate them nor concede defeat in our own struggle. We would not, and should never, adopt such methods. Instead, a revolutionary communication culture, one rooted in truth and collective consciousness, is possible and essential for lasting success.

I sincerely hope this enlightens the entire Brazilian left on the crucial and core role communication must play in the class struggle. This is about shaping socio-political thought, which is precisely why we must strengthen collective subjectivity. It requires deep reflection: the form matters as much as the content. That means reinforcing media channels dedicated to defending the people's interests.

We must also acknowledge the foundations laid by classical theory. It emphasized the vital importance of media, from state and party media to grassroots mass media, and learned from revolutionary communication processes across the world. We draw inspiration from sources like Lenin's Spark, Marx's Rhenish Newspaper, and Cuba's Granma. We are nourished by the insights of Gramsci, Rosa Luxemburg, and Kollontai; by the experience of the Chinese Communist Party; and by the revolutionary publications that emerged during China's struggles in the 1920s.

Yet ideological reformation is both essential and urgent. Given the environment in which we operate, we must evolve and develop political communication practices suited for the 21st century, and we must do so through the social networks. I have no doubt we have chosen the most challenging path. But every day, we reaffirm our commitment: conscience over manipulation, truth over falsehood, collective construction over chaos, knowledge over ignorance, and hope over fear.

This is a long-term endeavor, not an immediate fix. It demands persistent effort, continuous refinement, dialectical analysis, and extensive practice. I hope that, despite our different backgrounds and contexts, we can come together more often to share experiences and advance toward this common goal. This isn't just about sharing content or expanding our audience: that alone is not enough. Many technical strategies promise greater influence on social media, but often the content becomes mere grandstanding, lacking in-depth analysis. Such approaches fall short of the standards of good journalism.

What we need is to achieve our goals on the basis of long-term development, collaborative effort, and political clarity. We must understand what kind of communication we are building, and what goals we are aiming at. Our mission is undoubtedly challenging and extended in time, but our goals are not temporary. They must be cemented into a culture that breaks monopolies of thought. All I can say is, let's fight it out together.

Thank you.

1.3.4 Cuba: Communication Challenges in the Age of Artificial Intelligence and the Imperative to Build a New Communication and Information Order

• Speaker: Randy Alonso Falcón

• Year: 2025

Technologies have substantially impacted and modified communication processes throughout history: the printing press, radio, cinema, television. But never before have they had such a disruptive, comprehensive, and globalizing impact as since the emergence of the internet, through the web, digital social networks, big data, and now the development of artificial intelligence.

Not only have the media changed, but the ways in which we consume information and interact with each other have also changed dramatically. "Technology," says renowned Latin American communication theorist Jesús Martín Barbero, "changes the way symbols are created, distributed, and consumed, influencing culture and identity."

"Technologies are not neutral," Barbero asserts, "because today more than ever they constitute enclaves of condensation and interaction of economic and political interests with social mediations and symbolic conflicts. But, for that very reason, they are constitutive of new ways of building public opinion and new forms of citizenship, that is, of the new conditions in which politics is said and done."

Nothing better illustrates this than the exact moment we are living in, one of confusion and multiple uncertainties, marked by the arrival in the White House of the plutocracy led by Donald Trump, in which the magnates, billionaires from the big tech companies, have literally placed themselves in the front row of power. We saw this at Trump's inauguration; we also saw it at the lavish dinner that King Charles III hosted for the White House tenant during his recent visit to the United Kingdom.

According to Spanish academics Francisco Sierra Caballero and Antonio Maillo, we are witnessing *"a new form of imperialism, one that is not based on territorial conquests but on the control of information, the modulation of discourse, and the oligopolistic control of technology."*

Some, such as Yanis Varoufakis, the former Greek finance minister, call it **techno-feudalism**. I prefer to call it **techno-fascism** because of the dangerous expressions of the extreme right, xenophobia, and exclusion that defend imperial power and its big tech companies as a whole.

A Cuban Battle Against Manipulation, Hatred, and the Blockade.

"The truth in our time navigates stormy seas (...) That is the challenge for Cuban journalists," Cuban Revolution leader Fidel Castro Ruz would say to press professionals in Cuba in a message addressed to them on July 2, 2010.

Hate and lies, as algorithms programmed and favored by digital social networks and the main global communication channels, mark the communication processes of our times at great speed and to huge audiences.

But for Cuba, this is nothing new. Since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the United States and its powerful media and meaning-making apparatus have made recurrent use of lies and hatred against the Cuban social process.

As Mexican philosopher and communication theorist Fernando Buen Abad defines it: *"Imperialism is waging against Cuba the most prolonged, systematic, and sophisticated cognitive war in the inventory of semiotic domination of our time. It is not only waged against a territory or a government, but against a historical possibility of human thought."*

For more than six decades, the US empire has tried every tool, means, and language of seduction, manipulation, and domination against Cuba. This is not a debate of ideas, but rather an attempt to *"saturate the consciousness with toxic effects until the critical capacity" of Cubans is nullified.*

Thus, from the traditional media in the past and now from the digital public space and the so-called "social networks," numerous anti-Cuban campaigns have been articulated: first, the execution of the criminals of the Batista dictatorship who murdered thousands of Cubans in the 1950s was demonized; then, the legal and just nationalization of US companies that dominated most of the country's economy at will was manipulated; the image of Cuba as an obedient Soviet satellite was spread; the purpose of Cuba's internationalist presence in Africa (which preserved Angola's independence, contributed to the liberation and independence of Namibia, and helped defeat the oppressive apartheid regime in South Africa) was misrepresented, the issue of human rights was grossly manipulated, and the final hours of the Revolution and socialism in Cuba were predicted time and time again.

The major US print media and local Miami newspapers, news agencies, and shortwave radio stations from Florida or Central America served in the early decades of the Revolution as the main and almost daily vehicles for the campaigns against Cuba.

In the 1980s and 1990s, beginning with the presidency of Ronald Reagan—along with constant military threats and the intensification of the economic, commercial, and financial blockade, coupled with the imperial hope that the fall of socialism in the Soviet Union would mean the end of socialism in Cuba— the US government invested considerable resources to finance first a government radio station and ten years later a television station directed specifically against Cuba, both treacherously named after the Cuban national hero José Martí.

Between 1985 and 2025, the United States has allocated more than \$900 million from its budget to support the failed Radio and TV Martí projects, whose signals Cuba has managed to block at a much lower cost. It has been the most expensive, corrupt, and failed communications project in the history of the United States.

An audit report by a panel of experts appointed by the US Congress determined in 2019 that these anti-Cuban media outlets produce both "bad journalism" and "ineffective propaganda."

Although the Torricelli Act passed in 1992 by George H. W. Bush prohibited Cuba's access to the internet by any means other than expensive and slow satellite connections (even though numerous submarine telecommunications cables surround the Cuban archipelago), it made clear that the ultimate goal of this limited connection was to "promote political change in Cuba."

Therefore, while Cuba could only connect to the network of networks in 1996 at a speed lower than what a household can have today, the Clinton administration began to forge digital media projects aimed at Cuba, something that the Bush Jr. administration continued to encourage and finance.

But it was the Barack Obama administration that clearly identified the digital space as the arena for the symbolic and cultural dispute par excellence between our political systems, since that is where young people are active, new flows of information exchange are being established, media outlets associated with US financing and private capital are opening up in an unregulated manner, and the public media system is being weakened.

For the US government, "*...the web is part of a larger political battle,*" states bluntly US academic Ted Henken, one of the field operators of this strategy against Cuba, which is articulated in two strongly interconnected variables: the "free flow of information" (the freedom for the US to deploy all symbolic production aligned with its political objectives of "regime change" in Cuba) and "access to telecommunications services and technologies" (to provide the physical and logical

infrastructure that facilitates the flow of that symbolic expression in the Cuban digital public space).

This new "Washington Consensus" for Cuba, which redirected much of the multimillion-dollar funding approved each year by the US Congress for interference and subversion toward programs implemented in the digital public space, led to the creation of a dense and well-funded network of digital media outlets. From Miami, Madrid, Latin American cities, and from within Cuba, acts as a kind of "smear machine" in which they deploy their entire arsenal of *"cognitive distortion, perceptual manipulation, and emotional colonization,"* according to Buen Abad.



With the first Trump administration (2017-2021), in a scenario in which Cuba was able to open up mobile data connectivity and more than 60% of the population became connected, the strategy of communicational and symbolic influence spread strongly to digital social networks, with their algorithms favoring fake news, disinformation, manipulation, and hate speech.

In this more plutocratic and fascist remake we are experiencing, with Trump back in the White House, the anti-Cuban communication strategy has deepened and become

closely linked to the "maximum pressure policy" against Cuba advocated and executed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a Florida politician of Cuban origin.

Although Trump supported Elon Musk's decision to stop funding the US Global Media Agency (to which Radio and TV Martí are affiliated) due to its inefficiency and corruption, and to cut off the money flowing to other anti-Cuban media outlets through USAID and the NED, Marco Rubio managed to convince Trump to restore part of that funding to the media outlets most useful to this administration's strategy toward Cuba.

A few weeks ago, on September 25, the US administration announced an increase in funding for disinformation communications operations, approving an additional \$400 million for activities aimed, among other things, at countering "the Marxist and anti-American regimes of Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua."

Meanwhile, the United States continues to block Cuba's access to the fiber optic submarine cables of companies in that country. In November 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice recommended that the Federal Communications Commission deny a permit for the installation of the first submarine telecommunications cable between the two nations. The ARCOS-1 USA Inc. underwater cable system was then prevented from including Cuba in its network, which connects 24 landing points in 15 countries in the Americas.

Unable to interconnect directly with operators in the United States, where the main interconnection nodes are located, the Cuban Telecommunications Company is forced to extend the network with points in the United Kingdom, Jamaica, and Venezuela, which entails millions of dollars in expenses.

The United States also maintains a ban on Cuba's access to hundreds of software programs, applications, and developments, as well as scientific and specialized publications and telecommunications equipment.

THE TRUTH AND IDEAS, BUT NOT ENOUGH

Symbolic for these times of obscurantism and deepfakes is that the first communications offensive of the Cuban Revolution, as early as January 21 and 22, 1959, was called **OPERATION TRUTH**; when its leader Fidel Castro summoned more than 300 journalists from around the world to clarify the fairness of the criminal proceedings against Batista's criminals, whose dictatorship was financed and supported by the US government, and to firmly expose the principles of the nascent revolutionary process.

Those days gave rise to the idea of creating the first international media outlets of the Revolution: The **Prensa Latina** news agency and the shortwave radio station **Radio Habana Cuba**. Both have contributed to breaking the information blockade against Cuba.

At the helm of Prensa Latina was the Argentine revolutionary and journalist Jorge Ricardo Massetti, a friend and disciple of Che Guevara, who, in the process of founding the agency, clearly outlined its guiding principle: "We are objective but not impartial. We consider it cowardly to be impartial, because one cannot be impartial between good and evil."

The arrival of the internet and, above all, the web helped break down national barriers for audiences and extended the reach of the media. Cuba was able to insert itself into this new communications landscape later and with much less connectivity than others.

Prensa Latina, Radio Habana Cuba, and the Granma newspaper were the first Cuban media outlets on the web in mid-1996. At that time, the digital version of these media outlets had to be carried on a floppy disk to the Automated Exchange Center of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment in the Capitol in Havana, from where they were uploaded to the network via satellite at a connection speed of just 64 kb/s, which would be torture in this day and age.

In 1998, the first digital magazine on the Cuban web, Cubahora, was launched, and in 2001, the first digital cultural magazine, La Jiribilla, appeared.

At that time, only 3,625 computers in Cuba had full access to the Internet, and there were just over 35,000 email accounts.

In 2003, amid a fierce media campaign against Cuba, W. Bush's threats to take the war to 60 or more "dark corners of the world," and demonstrations in Miami calling for "Iraq now, Cuba later," **Cubadebate** was born as a native digital media outlet to confront "media terrorism" and denounce the campaigns against Cuba. I have had the honor of directing this digital portal since then and for 22 years.

Cubadebate was the first Cuban media outlet to jump into the interactivity of Web 2.0 in 2009, when less than 10% of the Cuban population had access to the internet, and the first to have a full presence on digital social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube since June 2009.

It was a clear strategy to communicate Cuba to the world, beyond the technological obstacles to be faced (Cuba could still only connect via satellite). As the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, pointed out on November 12, 2010, in : "We must

find a way to reach the informed masses. The solution is not in the newspapers... The internet is more accessible."

This logic led Fidel, once he had retired from government activity, to begin publishing exclusive newspaper articles in **Cubadebate** in 2008, when it was already the most visible and visited Cuban publication in the digital public space.

Today, **Cubadebate** is a multimedia publication with six thematic digital publications, a presence on multiple social networks, its own mobile app, notable production of audio, video, photos, and graphics, more than 230,000 reader comments on the main website, and millions of monthly visits.

Interestingly, in September and October 2025, China was the second country after Cuba with the highest number of visits to Cubadebate, something unprecedented in the publication's 22-year history.

This could be due to the weekly column we publish in Spanish and Chinese, in conjunction with Diario del Pueblo.

It is a collaborative experience that we also have with teleSUR (Venezuela), Sputnik (Russia), Nodal (Argentina), and that we will begin with Brasil de Fato.

Cubadebate is the main column of the communication organization IDEAS Multimedios, a leading institution in communication and innovation in Cuba.

IDEAS Multimedios also has an encyclopedia dedicated to the work and thinking of Fidel Castro: **Fidel Soldado de las Ideas** (), three television programs (including **Mesa Redonda**, which for 25 years has been the leading news and opinion program on Cuban television, where Fidel Castro appeared 45 times and the current President of Cuba, Miguel Díaz Canel, appears frequently), 28 Facebook pages, 9 accounts on X, 9 channels on Telegram, 6 channels on YouTube, 5 profiles on Instagram, 2 channels on WhatsApp, and 1 account on TikTok. It also provides communication services to third parties.

Our organization is currently leading the editorial, technological, and economic transformation of the Cuban public media system, aimed at overcoming the acute financial, logistical, technological, and human resource shortages facing the Cuban press today.

Our main strength lies in the interactivity of our media, our editorial leadership, and constant innovation, in a context of growing connectivity, although still at speeds that are slow by today's standards. While at the beginning of this century only 0.5% of

Cubans were connected, today more than 70% of the population is connected, mainly through mobile data.

Cubans connected to the Internet

Year	Users	% Penetration
2000	60,162	0.5
2005	1,096,608	9.7
2010	1,797,993	15.9
2015	3,553,543	31.2
2020	7,100,000	63
2025	7,810,000	71.3

Internet statistics from Live Counts and We are Social

On December 6, 2018, Cuba began offering internet connection services via mobile phones. Only 50% of the national territory has 4G coverage.

This scenario of widespread connectivity, with audiences permeated by dominant communication practices and under the influence of ongoing campaigns of manipulation and symbolic construction against Cuba, poses significant challenges for the Cuban media and communications system.

It is no longer enough to have the truth and the news: it is necessary to know how to communicate it quickly, well, through multiple channels, in different formats, and to diverse audiences, against adverse algorithms and manipulated emotions.

We have the handicap that Cuba does not have a millennial culture like China, nor a critical demographic mass for a huge domestic market, nor its own language, nor sufficient financial resources to rapidly develop exclusive digital platforms, although the country is making efforts in certain national developments.

Our alternative involves generating more and better-quality content, continuing to train professionals in these areas of knowledge, taking advantage of their technologies and putting them to work towards our goals, and promoting digital knowledge and culture that allows the majority of the population to decipher the manipulations and lies that permeate the digital world.

The Revolution and Socialism in Cuba must be achieved with communication as an essential tool. Communication to inform, to educate, to convene, to listen, to participate. Communication to generate a higher consciousness in human beings willing to build a prosperous society with a high level of social justice.

ALGORITHM DICTATORSHIP: FROM SOCIAL MEDIA TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

We are witnessing a new disruptive stage in communication. We are beginning to move from a scenario where conversation has been dominated by digital social media algorithms, with all their capacity to interconnect us thousands of miles apart, even without ever having physically met, to one marked by the accelerated development of Artificial Intelligence.

In the cultural, ideological, and military confrontation, in the dispute for hegemony that prevails in today's world, fueled by attempts by US imperialism to preserve its declining power, the media and digital social networks act as a political force and weapon of combat. They are conveniently used for provocation, exaltation, and softening in conflict situations.

We must remember the role that The New York Times and The Washington Post played in justifying the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Or the role of the media and social networks in the wars in Libya and Syria, or what Israel has done to manipulate the genocide against the Palestinian people, or how they are doing it now within Washington's frenzied all-out offensive against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: inventing the scenario, generating uncertainty, promoting hatred, attempting to break the enemy's morale, and inciting violence.

The Pentagon's Manual for Unconventional Warfare defines an escalation of actions to bring about the moral breakdown and surrender of the enemy, or to bring about military action that will defeat them by force of arms. Among these, it establishes, in order:

Creation of an atmosphere of widespread discontent through propaganda and political and psychological efforts to discredit the government.

Agitation, creation of favorable public opinion (calling for a national cause), creating distrust in established institutions.

Intensifying propaganda and psychological preparation of the population.

Digital social networks play a central role in this strategy today, due to their penetration (more than 5.24 billion registered identities on social networks at the

beginning of 2025, equivalent to 63.9% of the world's population), the convenient manipulation of their algorithms, the almost absolute dominance of the US in this arena, and the central role that large technology companies now play in imperial power.

If in the pre-digital era a few news agencies, television stations, and large newspapers, owned by a handful of firms, dominated the flow of messages, today that concentration and monopoly of information is reduced to a few companies that dominate technology, communication, entertainment, and advertising: Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp), Alphabet (Google), Amazon, Microsoft, Nvidia, Apple, and Tesla, known as "the magnificent seven."

As the Pew Research Center in the US noted in one of its reports: *"Technology companies such as Facebook (Meta) and Apple have become integral, if not decisive, players in all areas, supplanting the choices and purposes of the news media with their own decisions and objectives."*

In their overwhelming rise, the digital social networks managed by these tech companies act as large content editors that decide what will be privileged by being shown to the public and who will be exposed to them, manipulate algorithms to make certain information go viral, distribute and serve to hand out rewards and punishments (in an embarrassing game of censorship-self-censorship).

The majority are caught in this trap. As shown in the report "Digital 2025/Ever more connected" by DataReportal and We Are Social, even with the rise of AI, digital social networks and messaging platforms remain the most popular destination on the Internet, with more than 97% of connected adults visiting at least one social platform each month.

The quality of information has deteriorated with the secondary role that the media now plays. Misinformation, manipulation, fake news, conspiracy theories, and hate speech reign supreme on digital social networks. Lies and controversy, sensationalism and passion generate more likes and interactions than truth and reason.

Polarization is amplified on social media, fueling mistrust of politics, the press, institutions, and science.

For Emily Bell, director of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and a scholar of the digital environment, *"social media hasn't just swallowed journalism. It has swallowed everything. It has swallowed political campaigns,*

banking systems, personal stories, the entertainment industry, retail, even government and security."

In his last speech before leaving the White House, former US President Joe Biden issued a revealing warning about the power acquired by the big tech and communications empires, which he called the "tech oligarchy." *"An oligarchy of extreme wealth, power, and influence is taking shape in the United States that threatens our democracy, our basic rights, and our freedom,"* said Biden, who also pointed to the existence of an "ultra-rich techno-industrial complex" that could gain unchecked power over Americans.

And over much of the world, we might add.

Facebook, for example, has practically established itself as a virtual state with its own laws and no borders. It's more than 3 billion active users exceed the combined populations of China, Russia, and the US, and even exceed the combined populations of China and India, the two most populous nations on the planet.

Social media platforms are not only fundamental channels for the distribution of information on a global scale, but also sources for collecting data on the tastes, preferences, opinions, aptitudes, and moods of their billions of users.

Media laboratories, anchored in private companies and universities, work tirelessly to construct imaginaries and manufacture "realities." It is a constant battle for the conquest of the senses. They use tools from psychometrics, neuroscience, and the fabulous elements provided by Big Data. They appeal to growing connectivity to reach more audiences and segment them with personalized, well-studied messages that manipulate the emotions and subjective triggers of individuals, in a sort of "divide and conquer" strategy with broadband.

Billions are invested in these think tanks, from which political, electoral, and media campaigns are increasingly organized. Added to this are the actions of intelligence services, military establishments and their cyberspace armies, and the telecommunications empires themselves, increasingly entrenched in imperial power.

The organic links between these companies and the special services and the US State Department are well documented in the revelations of Wikileaks and those of former intelligence analyst Edward Snowden.

Ultra-conservative sectors have understood well the role of social media in redefining global communication and conversation and as indispensable tools for conquering and sustaining power. It is no coincidence that the genocidal Benjamin

Netanyahu said in early October in New York that "Weapons change over time... and today the most important ones are social media," adding: "The most decisive purchase being made right now is TikTok... I hope it goes through, because it could be momentous." The Zionist government of Israel is an expert in the strategic mobilization and manipulation of the information space in support of its criminal military operations against the Palestinian people.

But we are entering a new era of communication. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence is totally disruptive in political, economic, communicational, and social terms. With its arrival, the media as original sources of information are losing relevance, large search engines such as Google are beginning to lose their hegemony, and an encyclopedia such as Wikipedia is becoming almost a piece of digital museum history.

According to renowned communication theorist Ignacio Ramonet, the "new great technological rupture we are experiencing is disrupting the dominant model of communication—that of social media—to which we were already becoming accustomed, for better or for worse."

AI offers extraordinary opportunities in all areas of human life and development, but at the same time, it poses serious challenges: it privatizes collective knowledge at enormous speeds, introduces ideological biases under the guise of objectivity and the obscurity of its algorithms, raises ecological problems (excessive energy and water consumption), data privacy issues, cybersecurity, technological dependence, and ethical dilemmas such as the replacement of human labor (a basic and fundamental condition of human life, as defined by Friedrich Engels) and its use in lethal weapons and wars.

The American "magnificent seven" have thrown themselves into the race for artificial intelligence. They do not want to lose the comfortable monopoly that the era of digital social networks has left them. These companies are known to invest around \$400 billion annually in AI. Meanwhile, Open AI, the creator of Chat GPT, which already has 800 million users, has signed a \$1 billion commitment this year with Oracle, Nvidia, and AMD to secure more than 20 gigawatts of computing power (equivalent to the energy of 20 nuclear reactors) to operate its AI models.

For much more modest sums, China has managed to develop its own successful AI models such as Deepseek and Doubao.

The first impacts of the feverish race among technology companies are already being felt. Amazon has announced the layoff of 14,000 workers to reduce costs and

invest in AI. On October 28, Elon Musk launched Grokipedia, based on the artificial intelligence chatbot Grok, as an alternative to Wikipedia.

There is already talk of Quantum Artificial Intelligence, which would combine the superpower and speed of quantum computing with the advanced possibilities of artificial intelligence, allowing algorithms to be applied to gigantic databases with more complete answers in a matter of seconds.

A new gap of inequality is opening up in the generation, processing, and consumption of knowledge, which means accentuating economic and social disparities between nations and human groups.

Communication and the production of meaning will continue to be in very few hands, which will continue to reproduce the model of information as a commodity and mediate our access to knowledge based on who can pay and what.

ONE WORLD: MULTIPLE VOICES

Faced with the predatory, dystopian, opaque, and uncertain model of communication in our times, as a space of power, an object of disputes, remodeling, and struggle for hegemony, it is urgent to establish a New Information and Communication Order, which can take as its model, in order to overcome it, the efforts of Irish Nobel Peace Prize winner Sean McBride and other personalities such as the beloved Nobel Prize winner for Literature and founding journalist of the Prensa Latina Agency, Gabriel García Márquez, who produced a comprehensive reflection on the problems of communication in the 1980s for UNESCO.

That insightful study, entitled "One World, Many Voices," proposed communication policies for independence and self-development and established key guidelines for building that New World Information and Communication Order:

Elimination of imbalances and inequalities between developed countries and the so-called Third World.

Eradication of the negative effects produced by the creation of communication monopolies.

Guaranteeing the plurality of information sources and channels.

Increasing the capacity of Third World countries to improve the situation, equipment, and

Respecting the right of citizens to access sources of information and actively participate in the communication process.

These are very current foundations for transforming the hegemony and manipulation that are still present today in the communication space, designed to prop up and disguise existing economic and social contradictions. Although it may be necessary to radicalize approaches to phenomena that have deepened and update regulatory elements related to the use of technologies developed in the last 45 years.

But the value of the MacBride Report then and now is undeniable. Following its publication, Ronald Reagan's administration decided to withdraw the US from UNESCO, just as Donald Trump has done in 2025.

To quote McBride himself, "...the objectives will remain the same: greater justice, greater equity, greater reciprocity in the exchange of information, less dependence on communication flows, less top-down dissemination of messages, greater self-sufficiency and cultural identity, and greater benefits for all of humanity."

A new international economic order, new global governance and security, and a new information and communications order are essential.

But they will not be achieved without a battle of ideas in every possible arena. The powerful will not easily give up or abandon their privileges in controlling the world stage, the institutions that produce meaning, and the imposition of their cultural and symbolic power.

The countries of the Global South should unite in this crucial battle. The BRICS countries, in particular, should articulate themselves more solidly in the field of information and communications, with a counter-hegemonic, inclusive, and peaceful discourse. Joint research in this area, the development of our own technologies and applications, and the infrastructure that connects us must be encouraged.

We should coordinate to share in our media the best of the thinking and journalism produced in our countries. We must multiply the reach and impact of progressive and humanist thinking in the face of the promotion of neo-fascism and barbarism.

Today, more than ever, when cultural and ideological disputes are intensifying, when obscurantism and neo-fascism are trying to prevail, when lies and hatred are flooding social conversation, when Artificial Intelligence is beginning to impose ways of doing things as well as mirages and distortions, let us remember the call of the Italian communist intellectual Antonio Gramsci:

"Educate yourselves, because we need all our intelligence.

Be moved, because we need all our enthusiasm.

Organize yourselves, because we need all our strength."

Organize, create, tell stories, move people with intelligence, emotion, and strength.
As Jesús Martín Barbero defined us with profound simplicity:

"We need to make our story so that they count on us when it comes to doing the math."

1.3.5 Media Cooperation Among Latin American News Agencies The U.S. Blockade and Information Sovereignty in the Global South

• Speaker: Evelyn Leyva Romero

• Year: 2024

Our nation has long faced the severe challenge of illegal unilateral coercive measures, constituting a rare humanitarian crisis in modern international relations. Against this backdrop, the Latin American News Agency (ALBA-TIN) stands as a noteworthy example of cross-regional information dissemination. Founded in 1959 by renowned Cuban journalist Jorge Ricardo Maceo, this agency has consistently upheld the core tenets of journalistic professionalism: objectivity must be integrated with value judgments, and truth must be conveyed on the foundation of an unwavering pursuit of justice.

Guided by this journalistic ethic, ALPA has built an independent information dissemination system that effectively counters the information hegemony of transnational media conglomerates. Its reporting network spans the Global South, with particular focus on structural injustices in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, systematically documenting the realities of marginalized communities overlooked by mainstream narratives. By establishing multilingual communication platforms, the agency consistently provides developing nations with news products offering non-Western perspectives, successfully building a media bridge for equal dialogue between the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

As Cuba's sole international news agency, Latin American News Agency (ALANews) persistently fulfills its journalistic duties under exceptional circumstances. Cuba currently faces systemic suppression through prolonged economic blockades, unilateral coercive measures, and designation on the "State Sponsors of Terrorism" list based on unfounded accusations. It must be unequivocally stated that the blockade is not a fictional narrative but a tangible control mechanism operating for over 60 years, whose implementation imposes structural constraints on media institutions. The international community harbors misconceptions about this blockade: its primary targets are all Cuban citizens, and its scope far exceeds conventional economic sanctions.

Over the past year, our agency has faced multiple challenges, with innovation driven primarily by two factors: persistent economic constraints and the pressure of technological evolution in the international media landscape. On the cybersecurity front, our official YouTube channel suffered systematic cyberattacks this year from North American commercial entities. These actions aimed to suppress our

information dissemination capabilities and curb the expansion of our media influence. Such offensive-defensive confrontations have become routine, reflecting the information hegemony system constructed by certain forces leveraging technological advantages. Their core objective lies in reshaping the distribution of discourse power within the international public opinion arena.

The strategic path to overcoming this impasse lies in strengthening media collaboration mechanisms, focusing on three key initiatives: First, establishing a multilateral cooperation framework for Global South media to create platforms for resource sharing and joint production. Second, advancing cross-language technology adaptation and building multimodal communication matrices to dismantle technical barriers to information flow. Third, creating regular strategic dialogue channels to develop collective responses to major issues in the media sector, such as technological ethics and data sovereignty. This collaborative system must transcend traditional geo-political divisions to forge a new international communication order with normative-setting capabilities.

For China and other developing nations, advancing international technological cooperation now presents a critical window of opportunity. More inclusive policy frameworks should empower Global South countries lacking access to technology, while high-level dialogue mechanisms should promote the equitable sharing of cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence and big data, along with innovative models. Only by integrating Southern nations into the technological transformation process can a coordinated response system to global challenges be built. Guided by the principle of civilizational diversity and respecting each country's development path while rejecting the law of the jungle, the international community should strengthen information dissemination collaboration. Strategic coordination should enhance the Global South's voice in the international discourse arena.

Facing economic downturn pressures, the multilingual media alliance "Voice of the Global South," spearheaded by Latin American News Agency, holds exemplary value. This platform has already aggregated over 150 transnational media organizations, with expectations for more members to join in its development. Such multilateral cooperation mechanisms have proven highly effective in promoting media industry exchanges: they facilitate direct dialogue channels among media practitioners while creating possibilities for establishing efficient collaborative networks. By expanding the reach of information dissemination and broadening audience coverage, such cooperation not only helps refine the international communication landscape but also injects constructive momentum into safeguarding peace and security and advancing human development.

We sincerely hope all participants will seize this forum as an opportunity to translate outcomes into concrete cooperative projects, advancing pragmatic collaboration and strategic alignment. All parties should fully summarize applicable experiences, transforming the forum's achievements into sustained momentum for deepening multilateral cooperation, and jointly forging a solid and stable partnership.

Thank you for your attention and participation!

1.3.6 Latin American Media and Depoliticization of Global South Communication Critique of Chinese Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

- Speaker: Mauro Ramos

- Year: 2024

Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres García's classic painting "The Inverted Map of America" profoundly reveals that the Global South has always been a vital direction for human civilization's development.

Though Latin America is geographically the most distant region from China, deep bonds have formed between their peoples over the past decades. As vital channels for fostering mutual understanding, cultural dissemination and media exchanges still hold significant potential for growth. Currently, over 400 foreign journalists from more than 40 countries and 210 media organizations are based in China, yet only four Latin American media outlets from two countries have established branches here. Represented by Brazil's TVT, Brasil de Fato, and sister media outlet teleSUR, and through the collective efforts of industry colleagues like Cuban correspondent Evelyn, these institutions account for less than 2% of China's resident media presence. Notably, since launching its Spanish-language channel in 2007, China Global Television Network (CGTN) has established strategic collaboration with the Latin American Information Alliance, which encompasses 22 member organizations. Recently, it further expanded its reach by adding a Portuguese-language broadcasting platform. These practical approaches align closely with our vision for fostering media cooperation among Southern nations.

Historically, perceptions of China in Brazil and Latin America have been constrained by limited information channels. Brazilian mainstream media routinely rely on news sources from Northern Hemisphere news agencies and outlets—such as Bloomberg, The Economist, and Reuters—resulting in local societies constructing their China narratives primarily through Western lenses. This dissemination model exhibits clear flaws: its narrative framework is fundamentally shaped by ideological stances and geopolitical strategic needs. Numerous cases demonstrate that such media coverage of China often deviates from objective reality, serving more as tools for advancing Northern Hemisphere nations' foreign policy agendas.

Take The Economist's recent China coverage as an example. Its narrative framework has undergone phased adjustments: from early sensationalism about "China's economic collapse" to emphasizing "slowing growth," then shifting to new concepts like "structural overcapacity." Relying solely on such sources to observe China inevitably leads to cognitive dissonance: warnings of an "economic crisis" coexist

with concerns over "excess capacity risks." This phenomenon stems from the fact that dominant media outlets in the Global North consistently prioritize constructing strategic skepticism toward China as their core communicative objective. Through selective information dissemination, they persistently erode international trust in China's development model.

The operational mechanisms of these media outlets exhibit systemic characteristics: their primary objective is to maintain a critical narrative framework about China within the international public sphere. They then leverage various macro or micro events—regardless of factual basis—to reinforce this preconceived stance. This communication strategy not only influences audience judgments on specific incidents but also profoundly shapes the cognitive paradigms through which China-related issues are observed.

Through Mr. Chen Xuemin's introduction, you have gained an initial understanding of the "Village Super League" tournament. Notably, this grassroots sports event originating from China has not only sparked domestic discussion but also garnered extensive coverage from international mainstream media outlets including Reuters and The New York Times. It should be noted that some foreign media outlets exhibit limitations in their narrative perspective when covering this case—a feature report by a certain authoritative international media outlet omitted the contextual background of poverty alleviation policies. While this may not necessarily constitute reporting bias, China's rural revitalization strategy remains a core dimension for understanding such phenomena within the modernization process of the Global South.

Following China's historic eradication of absolute poverty in 2020, General Secretary Xi Jinping explicitly stated: "We must consolidate the achievements of poverty alleviation and resolutely prevent large-scale relapse into poverty." Significantly, Rongjiang County—one of the last deeply impoverished counties to be lifted out of poverty—has transformed sporting events into an engine for economic growth through its innovative "Village Super League Plus" development model. Data reveals that with a resident population of 400,000, the county welcomed over 7 million tourist visits in 2023, generating comprehensive cultural tourism revenues exceeding 8 billion yuan. This development outcome demonstrates the distinct advantages of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics in grassroots governance, providing a replicable practical model for rural revitalization in the post-poverty-eradication era. We extend our congratulations to the officials and people of Rongjiang for their phased achievements.

The core mission of Brasil de Fato is to systematically present China's current development landscape and perspectives. As the first media organization in Latin America to establish a regular feature on Chinese figures, we have built a multidimensional narrative framework through ongoing interviews with educators, industry experts, government officials, and ordinary citizens. Over the past 18 months, we have conducted in-depth interviews with over 100 representative figures, including iconic personalities such as Yang Liwei, China's first astronaut.

While the growing international attention to China's development achievements is commendable, we must remain vigilant against certain narratives that attempt to depoliticize these accomplishments—separating major achievements like the world's largest high-speed rail network, intelligent industrial systems, and technological innovations from the institutional strengths of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Our organization consistently adheres to objective principles in reporting, accurately reflecting the fundamental role of the socialist path with Chinese characteristics in advancing China's modernization.

Data from our special program "Diversification of the International Monetary System" shows that related video interactions exceeded one million views, fully reflecting the public's widespread concern for reforming the international financial system. In our series on China's high-speed rail construction, Brazilian audiences demonstrated particular interest, with numerous comments noting that this successful experience holds significant reference value for Brazil, a country with vast territory.

Before coming to China for work, my first China-related report focused on the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. General Secretary Xi Jinping clearly stated at the Congress that Marxism is the fundamental guiding ideology for the founding and governance of our Party and country. Since beginning my work in China news reporting, I have deeply appreciated this. Notably, while certain Western media outlets persist in constructing narratives of distrust toward China, the people of developing nations remain steadfast in their eagerness to understand China. Despite policy fluctuations in some governments, the people of the Global South universally harbor an intrinsic desire to deepen South-South cooperation. As practitioners of mass media, our core mission lies in responding to the demands of our era, committed to building bridges for communication and mutual learning among the peoples of the South, and advancing the construction of a more cohesive South-South humanistic community.

1.4 The Struggle over the Right to Narrate—Media Resistance in the Global South

1.4.1 Media Narratives: Western Propaganda and the Multipolar World of the Global South

• Speaker: Sofya Melnichuk

• Year: 2024

It has been frequently stated that a fundamental shift is required in how stories are told, how voices are amplified, and how narratives are constructed. In my address today, I would like to pose a fundamental question: Is there a universal truth? Are there universal values? And is there a singular right side of history?

Allow me to begin with a personal narrative, that of a Russian who has become a living testament to the shortcomings of Western propaganda. Like our esteemed editor-in-chief, Margarita Simonyan, and many other colleagues, I was once an exchange student in the United States. As was common for many teenagers in post-Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) Russia, I was convinced that the West represented the epitome of civilization, that ultimate truth resided within Western values and narratives. I was, therefore, immensely eager to experience the world I had only glimpsed through American movies and the MTV channel. My initial skepticism regarding this perceived ideal world emerged during a history class in an American high school. To my profound astonishment, I learned that the Americans had 'won the Second World War.' Naturally, this sparked an immediate debate, as it presented a profoundly one-sided historical perspective. I quickly realized that my classmates were simply uninformed, entirely unaware of the immense sacrifice the Soviet people had made for victory and peace. This experience marked my first encounter with American exceptionalism, revealing a narrow and, frankly, rather condescending worldview.

In the years that followed, I would learn even more about this phenomenon. Repeatedly, I found myself needing to challenge the narratives about Russia that my American friends consumed in major American newspapers. They would often inquire, 'Why do you remain in Russia? Russia is such and such.' My patient response was always, 'You should visit Russia. See it for yourself. Stop allowing American newspapers to form your judgments for you.' Yet, ironically, these same individuals consistently preached the narrative of 'embracing difference – not better, not worse, just different.' Unfortunately, many global events are consistently covered from a biased perspective, with the voices of countries the Western world refers to as 'peripheral' often ignored. It is frequently overlooked that these so-

called peripheral nations are, in fact, vital contributors to our single, interconnected world. Western media has frequently shaped a distorted perception of reality, reinforcing stereotypes that depict Global South countries as requiring guardianship, a portrayal that is simply untrue. Disproving this narrative has precisely been at the core of our work.

Over the past three years, we have all witnessed the Western world, in its full manifestation, demonstrate its readiness to 'embrace difference' by imposing sanctions and issuing public threats against those unwilling to conform to the dictates of Western propaganda. Consider the case of American journalist Tucker Carlson, who faced severe criticism in the United States and was even labeled a traitor. For what? He dared to speak with Vladimir Putin; he dared to inquire about his perspective. Is that truly a crime against humanity? It is important to acknowledge that attempts to isolate Russia and Russian media through such means have not proven successful. Indeed, even Western media outlets have confirmed that RT (Russia Today) influence is only growing in regions such as the Balkans, the Middle East, and Latin America. These restrictions on the dissemination of truth and opinions from a Russian perspective are simply not working.

In October, Russia hosted the largest international forum since the inception of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). This event effectively refuted claims of Russia's global isolation, with leaders from 36 countries participating. It is crucial to note that as the host country, Russia did not prioritize its own security concerns or exclusively focus on the Ukrainian crisis. Instead, the emphasis was placed on issues relevant to all Global South countries; we highlighted shared problems and shared solutions. BRICS, notably, operates without a dominant leader that sets the agenda, thereby representing an alternative, independent space distinct from institutions centered on Western interests. Our goal at RT aligns with these objectives: to create an alternative platform and promote a different perspective, empowering our audience to question more deeply and ask: Why are these developments occurring? Why are they unfolding in this particular manner? When one genuinely listens to these diverse points of view and voices, one can make better decisions, and the resolution of contradictions becomes significantly easier.

Addressing the question I posed at the outset, it is clear that universal values indeed exist. We all aspire to peace, justice, and prosperity for all nations. However, there is definitively no universal way to achieve these aspirations, no singular prescribed path to their realization. There is no singular 'right side,' but rather a multitude of perspectives that must be heard to achieve global universal goals and navigate the world without delusions or misconceptions, enabling informed decisions. As we continue this discussion today, confidence exists that this meeting will strengthen

cooperation in this field, spark new ideas, and pave the way for more meaningful and impactful collaborations. Together, it is possible to build a media landscape that is not only fair but also transformative, serving as a catalyst for global peace, development, and unity in an increasingly interconnected world.

1.4.2 The Nature and Role of Mainstream Media in U.S. Politics and the Development of Alternative Media

• Speaker: Ben Becker

• Year: 2023

I come from the United States, from New York, where we are building an anti-imperialist news platform called Breakthrough News. I want to set a foundation for my talk today by reminding everyone that, although this history is often buried, the fate of the U.S. left and the U.S. independent media has always been, in a way, intertwined with that of China. In 1950, the U.S. political establishment and its media apparatus were convulsed by what was called McCarthyism—a massive attack on civil liberties, on intellectuals, on artists, on labor leaders, and on all those people of conscience who wanted a world of peace and who questioned the foreign policy of the United States. A crusade was waged to crush their dissent, to silence them, and to end their careers. The animating question of that moment was “Who lost China?” This premise was, of course, a colonial premise—the idea that China could ever belong to anyone. But in Washington, Joe McCarthy and other politicians pointed the finger at anyone who had ever called for an independent foreign policy, anyone who had ever called for respecting self-determination, and said, “You are the reason we have lost China—and lost China to communism, no less.” Anti-communist hysteria was then utilized to drive out dissent and to prepare for war in what was the Korean War for larger control over the Pacific and the whole region of Asia.

I start here because we are now entering a new period of McCarthyite-type attacks inside the United States—once again suppressing free speech and dissent, and once again labeling anyone who speaks out as an agent of Russia or China. This is a period where both parties, Republicans and Democrats, accuse each other of being agents of a foreign power. This is then utilized to block movements for social change, to arrest those who are fighting for racial equality and for higher wages, and to say to them, “You, too, are agents of a foreign power.” And once again, the question, in a way, is “Who lost China?”—but it is “Who lost China, Part 2,” because the imperialists, having mistakenly believed that they had recaptured China, are now waking up to the reality that China was never theirs to begin with and that China has always been striking its independent path. In a way, they are also asking “Who lost Russia?” because they thought they had recaptured Russia after the defeat of the Soviet Union. And when India and Pakistan do not join in with the sanctions against Russia, they say, “Who lost India?” and “Who lost Pakistan?”—and, in fact, “Who lost the whole Global South?” This is the question that is now animating Washington as the unipolar world very rapidly becomes a new world.

We know from inside the United States that this changing world environment poses particular challenges to our work as independent media and journalists. We know that we are now operating in essentially a period of information war. This is not hyperbole or rhetoric, as information war is a declared domain of warfare by the U.S. Pentagon. In their minds, war is no longer a matter of land, sea, air—not even just space or cyberspace; there is a sixth domain of war, and it is the information domain. They have learned from their defeat in Iraq, in particular, that unless you win over the hearts and minds of the people, no amount of force can secure a victory for the imperialists. And so they are turning their energies more and more to the question of winning over hearts and minds, and for them, media and information are the chief battlefield in this particular domain.

We at Breakthrough News are operating just five blocks away from the headquarters of the New York Times, and only a couple of subway stops away from Wall Street and the Wall Street Journal. So we are quite literally behind enemy lines in this information war. What can we observe? What can we share from what we have experienced in New York City? One is that the U.S. journalistic profession—which prides itself on being a so-called Fourth Estate, an independent, politically detached, and neutral instrument following the facts alone and in pursuit of the truth—is a lie. While individual journalists, of course, may follow this ethos in their own work at some of these major publications, the last year, in particular in the coverage of the Ukraine war, has revealed that the Fourth Estate is really nothing but a fourth branch of government. We have three branches of government officially, but this media apparatus has functioned entirely as the stenographers of power. The role of media, of course, is supposed to be to provide historical context, to ask the fundamental questions, and to challenge the powerful. Inside the United States, we find journalists who are merely repeating the lies and the narratives of the government apparatus. There is no questioning whatsoever. In fact, to even raise the question—How did this war come about? What are its historical roots? Who predicted it was going to come? How could it have been avoided? —all of these are questions of so-called Russian misinformation. To even ask the questions, or to ask the question “How could the war be brought to an end?”—which, of course, has a very simple answer—is itself deemed Russian disinformation according to the new logic of Washington.

Many people have spoken already about how information is entirely monopolized inside the United States. I want to give just a few figures, which some of you, of course, are already familiar with six giant mega-corporations control 90% of what we read, watch, and listen to in the United States. This is down from maybe 50 corporations that dominated 90% only 40 years ago. But even to talk about the question in terms of ownership is somewhat limiting, because it is not just about

who owns the media; it is about their political function—the fact that the editorial boards for all of these major media conglomerates are themselves deeply enmeshed with the political elites, deeply enmeshed with the intelligence services of the West, and with buddy-buddy relationships with those who are driving foreign policy. So even if they were spun off into independently owned corporations, what good would it do if the editorial boards have all been raised in the same foreign policy establishment? They have gone to school together and they eat dinner together. This is the real function of a ruling-class media, as we call it; it is not just about who owns it but also about how they operate.

The good news is, of course, that people no longer trust this media. American distrust of the media is at a record high. According to recent polls, only 7% of American adults have a great deal of trust in newspapers, TV, and radio news, while 27% have only a fair amount. This means that two-thirds of adults in the United States have little to no trust in the traditional media. This is down from nearly 70% 50 years ago. It, of course, corresponds to a greater distrust in all the main institutions in U.S. society. Social media plays a big role in this, as the forms of communication and the ways of consuming information have changed so rapidly. But it does not mean that the imperialist media is somehow just going to wither away or give up their project. We have noticed that they have three main ways they are trying to recapture the legitimacy they are already losing through this establishment media.

First, as we have mentioned already, are the McCarthyite attacks: the censorship, the muzzling, and the banning of channels. Second, there is the shadow-banning and the private control of algorithms, which really control the means of distribution. They give the illusion of democracy—everyone can create whatever you want and anyone can post—but then they control who gets to see it. So they have made up for the lack of control over publication by now controlling distribution. Third is the rebranding of themselves and their narratives as independent media. I want to flag this as a particular challenge and threat: knowing how mainstream media is already distrusted, they have created a multitude of brands that function on social media that are really just a rebranding of the traditional media. They are consuming all the same talking points, packaging them with a modern, hip, young aesthetic, but are essentially the same media. Part of these new media brands are funded by this or that billionaire within the Republican or Democratic Party, but all of them still operate within the same imperialist consensus. In a way, this can become even more dangerous, because if you have 500 YouTube channels with ostensibly different politics all saying, in different ways, that Russia is the enemy or that China is the enemy, this can actually have a more profound psychological effect than just listening to ABC or CBS or NBC, because you start to feel like you are the only one.

These are complex problems that require very sophisticated responses. I want to speak a little bit about what Breakthrough News is trying to do. We have two main angles at Breakthrough News, and we are a small team. We were only founded three years ago; the first year and a half we were really working remotely, so we have only had about a year and a half to two years of functioning uninterrupted. Our two main angles are these: we want in-depth content and education about the perspectives of the Global South and those countries that are targeted by imperialist sanctions. We want to hear directly from those who are being demonized and get their counterpoint. Second, we want to cover the struggles of resistance inside the United States against the U.S.'s own human rights violations. Lest we forget, half of the U.S. population is already in or near poverty; tens of millions of people cannot pay their rent; last year, 900 people were killed by police inside the United States; we have a vast apparatus of detention centers where refugees and migrants are tortured on a regular basis; and we have people who are going hungry, living on the street in the United States. These are human rights violations, and unless we can document these human rights violations ourselves and transmit them to the world, we would not be actually challenging the American exceptionalism that they like to project about themselves.

We believe there is a great audience for this inside the United States and, in fact, around the world. In the last two years, we have amassed around 700,000 subscribers to our channels. We are averaging around 28 million views per month with this kind of content, combining short videos that document the abuses and the resistance struggles in the United States and then longer-form interviews with experts from around the world who counter the foreign policy establishment. We think there is a big audience because we know there are now millions of people, especially young people, in the United States who have some positive feelings about socialism and anti-capitalism. Despite the whole history of McCarthyism, that fog of anti-communism is beginning to lift. There are 25 million people who protested racist police violence after the killing of George Floyd; they have to be reached with a different media. There are millions who are outraged by the anti-Asian violence and racism that is so common now in the United States and which people are connecting with the foreign scapegoating of China in particular; they have to have a media that reaches them. There are millions in or near poverty; they have to have a media where they can see themselves, not just the lifestyles of the rich and famous. There are many struggles that are taking place inside the United States that people around the world are simply not aware of—even people in the United States are simply not aware of—and to the extent we start to disrupt this narrative that the United States is the land of milk and honey where the American Dream can easily be fulfilled, we believe we will be helping change the narrative on a global scale.

I want to close by recalling how McCarthyism actually fell in the 1950s. It did not fall because there was a big revolt within the elite sectors of the United States. McCarthyism fell because of the civil rights movement, because of the anti-war movement, and because of the movement of women—who were challenging Washington and challenging injustice and therefore changed the correlation of forces inside the United States. This, in turn, opened the political space for the young people who went to college in the 1960s to start to identify more with the Global South—with the struggles in Vietnam, with the struggle in China, and the struggle in Cuba—than with their own government. That is not just my claim. There is a poll from 1968 which said that college students in the United States had greater approval ratings for Che Guevara than for any of the presidential candidates who were running that year. That is how McCarthyism actually fell: through grassroots movements in the United States that identified with the Global South. And the United States is a country with a large Black community, a large Latino community, a large Asian community, and lots of white workers who are also hurting, and we believe that is how we are going to defeat McCarthyism once again—with grassroots movements and media that speak to them.

1.4.3 Russian Media: International Communication Landscape and Outlook

- Speaker: Vsevolod Pulya

- Year: 2023

Media sovereignty is actually a great thing when applied properly, because media sovereignty is an ability of a nation or a community to control and regulate the media landscape. It's a good thing because it helps to reflect unique culture and values of the respective country. It helps to preserve cultural diversity and promote national values while ensuring unbiased information dissemination.

One compelling aspect is promoting local stories and narratives, ensuring these stories are represented. This makes sense because we care most about what happens in our backyard. But as the world grows more complex, distant stories directly impact our lives. When lacking expertise to report on them, we must embrace foreign media with relevant expertise.

Foreign media can represent cultural values of respective countries. Some call this soft power, but I avoid that term because power implies enforcement. I prefer "bringing more context" to enrich dialogue and public discourse, making local audiences more knowledgeable—especially for countering stereotypes like those about Africa in Russia or China.

As manager of RT China and editor-in-chief of Russia Beyond (an RT cultural project with no politics), I've experienced excessive sanctions. Our Facebook groups, pages, and YouTube channels—even apolitical ones—face bans. For example, Facebook labeled Russia Beyond as "China state-controlled media" for a week. Our "Russian Kitchen" page sharing recipes for dishes like porridge was deleted. While media sovereignty is valuable, the US protecting audiences from Russian porridge seems extreme. That page was restored in 2019, but we still face shadow bans and restrictions.

Platforms impose their own opaque "media sovereignty" policies without transparency or third-party oversight—a complete black box we know nothing about. This compounds state-level regulations.

Allowing foreign media has pros and cons:

Pros include alternative viewpoints enriching public discourse; pushing local media to improve through competition; bringing new technologies and practices.

Cons include potential erosion of local culture; underfunded local media struggling to compete; risk of biased information dissemination.

Regulation must be balanced, transparent, and equally applicable—unlike RT's experience in Europe/US where we spent efforts overcoming artificial obstacles instead of storytelling. In China, straightforward rules allow our Chinese-language service to boost China-Russia understanding—something RT's global branches (RT Africa, RT Arabic, etc.) seek worldwide. Proper media sovereignty enables fruitful dialogue.

1.4.4 PressTV's Achievements Amidst Western Hegemony and Global South Media Solidarity

- Speaker: Mohammad Mahdi

- Year: 2023

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. When I say God, I want to say our god Allah is different from theirs. And what I mean by that? They say, "in god they trust." And I think they painted this sentence on their god. More and more, I feel their god is losing its power thanks to this legal organization process which has started, so maybe they need to change their trust in their god.

PressTV has tried to be the voice of the voiceless—those with little or no voice in Western media controlled by the Global North. This voice represents solidarity. Frankly, our journey was not easy. They removed us from satellites. They terminated our YouTube channel. They deleted Facebook and Twitter accounts. They imposed "shadow bans" so content does not reach followers. They confiscated our.com domain—I am not sure if any media faced this before. Recently they blocked our RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed. These actions show intolerance toward alternative views. They even targeted PressTV with sanctions.

Looking at this, one questions claims of media freedom and freedom of expression. They try to silence us because we are the voice of the voiceless, but we believe in our mission and will not give up.

We need global solidarity. When suppression targets any outlet, we must protest vigorously because today it is us, tomorrow it could be you. PressTV's 15-year struggles mirror what RT experienced in one year. They will target others, so we must report these actions and protest. We must create multinational online platforms (e.g., involving Ukrainian, Chinese, Russian media) to replace Western-controlled spaces and reach international audiences.

We must redefine mainstream narratives. We do not need AP (Associated Press) or Reuters dictating newsworthiness. If Israel jails Palestinians without trial under "administrative detention," that is newsworthy—yet Western media ignores it. If Canada preaches environmental policies at COP (UN Climate Change Conference) while Canadian mining companies pollute Africa, that is newsworthy. The U.S. Africa Command operates in 53 of 54 African nations, militarizing the continent—this goes unreported. Thousands of Somali civilians die under "war on terror" with no coverage. Corporations destroyed Iraq's infrastructure post-invasion, causing shortages—people deserve to know why.

Western media labels Iran's activities in West Asia (intentionally avoiding Eurocentric "Middle East") as "malign," similarly framing Russian activities in Africa as "malign" or Chinese investment via "debt trap" narratives. These frames are promoted as newsworthy, but not the suffering in Iran, Venezuela, Zimbabwe from Western sanctions. PressTV and IranPress are amplifying these stories—collective action can strengthen this work.

1.5 China's International Communication Practices and Reflections

1.5.1 The Global Dissemination and Influence of Mao Zedong's Works

- Speaker: He Mingxing

- Year: 2025

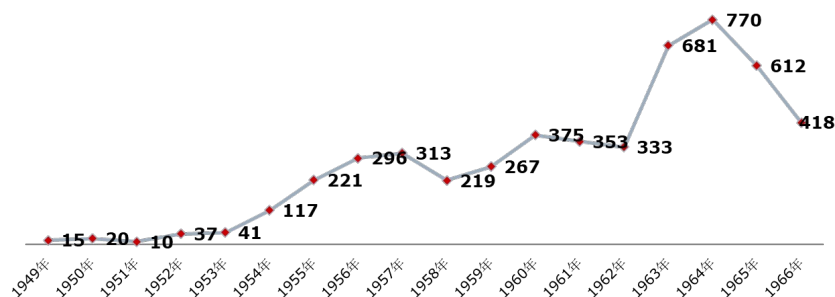
The theme of this conference is "Establishing a New World Order for Information and Communication in the 21st Century." I would like to share a story about how Mao Zedong's works were disseminated globally and gained influence. The context of their dissemination, the disseminators involved, and the translation and publication across different languages—every link and stage of translation, publishing, and distribution—reflected the struggle undertaken half a century ago by people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the so-called "Global South," to achieve a fair and just information and communication order and break the Western monopoly on information dissemination.

The First Proactive Overseas Dissemination by New China

Before 1935, Chinese Communist leaders like Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Zhu De had not yet gained widespread international attention. The outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japan marked a crucial turning point, with the publication of *Red Star Over China* in the West being the most successful effort in making the world aware of the Red Army's existence. After the founding of New China in 1949, the nation gradually gained attention on the international stage. Particularly against the backdrop of the Cold War, New China joined the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union and faced a comprehensive blockade by the capitalist camp led by the United States. For the first time, the international community focused relatively intensively on the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and their ideology. Thus, the international context for translating and disseminating Mao Zedong's works unfolded against the backdrop of the Cold War, where China sought to break through Western political, economic, and cultural blockades. A crucial catalyst was the surge of interest among Asian, African, and Latin American peoples in learning from the People's Republic of China's experience in shaking off colonial rule—the first wave of "learning from China."

Based on reports from the *People's Daily*, I once compiled statistics showing that between 1949 and 1966, delegations from Asian, African, and Latin American countries visited China with remarkable frequency—nearly one delegation every three days. These were high-level delegations received by national leaders such as Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, and Zhou Enlai.

亚、非、拉等国家、地区各种组织来访次数统计
(《人民日报》1949—1966年)



Number of Asian, African, and Latin American Delegations Visiting China, 1949-1966

These visiting delegations consistently inquired: What were the experiences that led to the new China's victory in achieving independence? Which aspects could be learned from? As early as 1948, the Czechoslovak side first expressed a desire to translate Mao Zedong's works, but this was personally halted by Mao Zedong himself. Stalin repeatedly expressed interest in reviewing Mao Zedong's works, primarily to verify whether Mao was a genuine communist. Similarly, the Northeast People's Government—the earliest liberated region—had begun preparations for translating Mao's works into Russian at the Soviet government's request, but this initiative was also halted. It was not until 1949, during Mao Zedong's visit to the Soviet Union, that Stalin again personally requested the translation of Mao's works into Russian. Mao finally agreed, but also expressed that the theoretical level of the Chinese Communist Party was limited and hoped that the Soviet side would send theorists to assist. Subsequently, under the guidance of Soviet theorist Eugene, the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union jointly compiled and translated Mao Zedong's works.



From 1952 to 1953, the first set of Mao Zedong's works in Russian was published in the Soviet Union. This Russian edition was based on the three-volume Chinese edition of Selected Works of Mao Zedong, which had been personally reviewed by Mao himself. Subsequently, these works spread to multiple socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Translations into various languages, including Romanian, Czech, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek, began to emerge, all using the Russian edition as their source text.

The Russian edition of Selected Works of Mao Zedong published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House of the USSR in 1952-1953

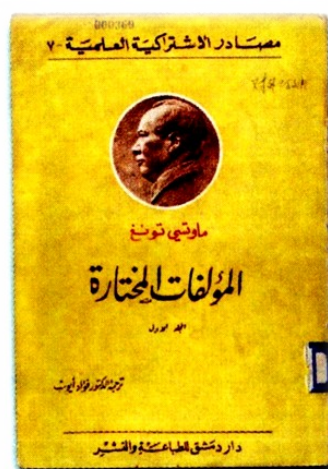
Within the Western bloc, the British Communist Party was the first to take an interest in Mao Zedong's works. In 1953, Lawrence of Arabia, acting on behalf of Russell, traveled to China and signed a publishing agreement with the Chinese International Bookstore for the first batch of English editions of Selected Works of Mao Zedong. He paid £12,000 in royalties, marking the first royalty payment received by the newly established People's Republic of China. Following the 1956 publication of Lawrence & Co.'s four-volume Mao Selected Works of Mao Zedong—the London edition that corresponded to the first three volumes of the Chinese edition—these works began circulating widely worldwide. The greatest interest came from countries in the "Global South." Consequently, the Central Committee decided to grant free authorization for English translations of Mao's works. Thereafter, Mao Zedong's works were no longer subject to any copyright fees, allowing for free translation and dissemination globally. This led to the emergence of numerous language editions, such as Arabic and Spanish versions. Many national liberation organizations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America also proactively utilized the English edition for further translations.



1954-1956 British Lawrence Press edition, 1954-1956 American New York International Press edition (based on the British Lawrence edition)



《抗日游击战争的战略问题》 印度·孟买人民出版社，1948年9月，32开，平装，79页。



《毛泽东选集》（第1卷）叙利亚·大马士革出版社出版，1967年，小16开，平装。

Some in Western academia often refer to the translation, publication, and dissemination of Mao Zedong's works abroad as "China exporting revolution." However, considering the origins of translating and publishing Mao's works overseas, this characterization is inaccurate. From 1948 to around 1960, China did not actively promote translations. The real driving force behind their dissemination came from people in countries and regions of the Global South. They sought the

"Chinese experience" to break free from Western colonial rule and to find an independent path for building their own nations.



French edition of Selected Works of Mao Zedong, translated and published by Paris Social Publishing House, 1955-1959

It was not until the 1960s that relevant authorities began actively promoting the translation and dissemination of Mao Zedong's works as the core, while also incorporating other publications. Revolutionary literary works such as Song of Youth, Snowy Plains, and Xiao Erhei's Wedding, along with Chinese children's books like Crossing Monkey Mountain, Little Horse Crosses the River, and The Proud General, all reached the world during this period alongside Mao Zedong's writings.





Binding and Transportation of New China's Foreign-Language Publications in the 1960s

At that time, New China's financial resources were far less than today's. Organizationally, a leading group headed by then Vice Premier Chen Yi was established to coordinate aviation transport, foreign exchange, and international postal services. Despite severe foreign exchange shortages, China insisted on distributing large quantities of foreign-language publications, including People's Pictorial, worldwide via air transport. This marked the first proactive international dissemination effort by New China, rewriting the millennia-long history where Westerners had dominated the transmission of Chinese culture abroad. This tradition began with missionaries arriving in China during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, followed by adventurers, sailors, and military personnel. The translation, publication, and dissemination of Mao Zedong's works abroad held multifaceted significance and value.

Establishing a New Model of "Cultural Mutual Assistance" Among Global South Nations

The translation, publication, and dissemination of Mao Zedong's works worldwide unfolded within the Cold War international landscape while being closely intertwined with national liberation movements across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It can be said that the global spread and influence of Mao's writings resulted from multifaceted, synergistic forces, establishing a new model of "cultural mutual aid" among Global South nations. This approach fundamentally diverged from the "cultural colonization" or "cultural hegemony" models imposed by Western nations upon the Global South.

For instance, in East Africa, newly independent nations like Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda declared Swahili as their official language. Yet they lacked the essential infrastructure for knowledge production and dissemination in Swahili—such as specialized publishing houses and printing presses for the national language. At this juncture, the newly established People's Republic of China assembled a Swahili editorial and publishing team, releasing Swahili editions of China Pictorial, Mao Zedong's works, and children's literature. These Swahili books and magazines arrived in East Africa largely free of charge, with many East African children even using these Chinese publications as classroom textbooks.

During the dissemination of Mao Zedong's works abroad, numerous touching stories unfolded across Asian, African, and Latin American nations. For instance, Iraq's earliest "Mossana Bookstore" sold approximately 500,000 Chinese publications in the 1960s. In Syria, a bookstore named "Damascus Publishing House," run by two brothers, they voluntarily translated the London edition of Selected Works of Mao Zedong into Arabic and organized Arab sinologists to translate Chinese literary works like Song of Youth. They promoted Arabic-language Chinese publications to countries like Oman that had not yet established diplomatic relations with China. These stories demonstrate that the dissemination and influence of Mao Zedong's works worldwide occurred through mutual interaction between disseminators and audiences, with the driving force stemming from the inherent ideological value of the works themselves. I repeatedly sought information about the Damascus Publishing House brothers through various channels, particularly during the period of the U.S.-led Iraq War in 2003, but to no avail.



The Tubaqi couple from Damascus Publishing House visited China in the 1980s



The dissemination of Chinese publications is equally widespread in African countries. For example, in Ghana, China provided hundreds of thousands of books and periodicals between 1963 and 1964, almost entirely as grant aid. Two brothers in Ghana, lacking stable employment, proactively expressed interest in distributing Chinese publications. Although China did not yet produce domestic automobiles at the time, it specially purchased a Toyota vehicle from Japan and shipped it to Ghana. This enabled the brothers, named Akong, to operate a mobile bookstore distributing Chinese publications across Ghana. They thus became long-term friends of China.

Chinese representative in Africa poses with the Akong brothers of Ghana's mobile bookstore

Numerous similar stories vividly illustrate the efforts made by New China during its first wave of cultural outreach, primarily centered on the works of Mao Zedong. Through organized and systematic overseas distribution of publications, China successfully broke through international isolation during the Cold War blockade and forged deep friendships with many nations. Large quantities of publications were sent as free cultural aid to Asian and African countries. For example, Ghana received 1.38 million copies, Tanzania 530,000 copies, Nigeria 850,000 copies, Algeria 640,000 copies, and Egypt 560,000 copies, all within just a few short years.

Also noteworthy is American friend Henry Neuss. Both his grandfather and father were American missionaries in China, and he spent his childhood in Guangzhou, speaking fluent Cantonese. After returning to the United States, he remained deeply attached to China. In the 1960s, he founded the American China Publications Company and, through connections, obtained the only license in the entire United States permitting the import of publications from the "People's Republic of China.

“During the height of the Sino-American Cold War, he spent \$66 on a cross-country bus ticket and traveled throughout the United States selling “Little Red Books” (Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong) via Greyhound buses, selling over two million copies. Due to the lack of postal and financial ties between China and the U.S. at the time, these earnings could not be promptly remitted to China. Instead, they were deposited into an account designated by the U.S. Treasury Department. It wasn’t until 1972, following the thaw in Sino-American relations, that the American Chinese Book and Periodical Company transferred nearly \$1 million to China—marking the first foreign exchange China received from the United States at that time.

In summary, the global dissemination and influence of Mao Zedong’s works constitute a vast cultural legacy, offering numerous lessons and insights relevant to contemporary times. How can we break through the long-standing suppression of the “Global South’s” voice by the Western world? My monograph, *A History of the Global Influence of Mao Zedong’s Works*, recently published by Springer Nature, traces the history of translating, publishing, and disseminating Mao Zedong’s works into over 20 languages. A key insight lies in solidarity and collaboration among Global South nations. In Western mainstream media like The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, the Global South remains virtually invisible—like a black hole. Southern nations must speak with a united voice, share resources, and establish their own communication systems. Solidarity among the Global South is a crucial step toward transforming the unequal and unjust information and communication order of today’s world. With sustained cooperation, many challenges will be overcome.

1.5.2 China's International Communication in the New Global Landscape

• Speaker: Ding Yifan

• Year: 2023

We are all discussing the future of media and news communication in the Global South. In fact, there are several thinking traps embedded in this topic, and many of us fall into them unconsciously. Only by breaking free from these traps can we begin to see the issues more clearly.

One obvious example is that many of our media outlets are supported by the central government, such as CGTN. However, as soon as we go abroad, others immediately label us as “government-affiliated media,” implying that we are untrustworthy simply because of our affiliation. This labeling makes it impossible to engage in meaningful debate. This is a manifestation of discourse hegemony and a classic thinking trap. If media supported by the government or central authorities is considered biased, then media backed by capital is often even less objective.

Let me offer an example. In the 1970s and 1980s, French television stations were all state-owned. During that period, French TV was relatively objective. After the 1980s, these stations were privatized and sold to individuals or capitalists. It then became clear that their reporting grew less objective, with a distinct capitalist imprint visible in how they covered and analyzed issues.

One of the most striking cases occurred in the early 21st century. From the 1980s into the 2000s, there was a well-known French television host and commentator who had been a prominent figure on TV for over 30 years. When then-President Sarkozy—widely seen as representing the interests of big capital—pushed certain public policies, this host offered some criticism. Immediately afterward, he was dismissed from his position.

The dismissal caused a public outcry in France, but to no avail—it was a decision made by the television station. In the past, during the era of nationalized media, it would have been nearly impossible to dismiss such a figure so casually. State-owned television operated much like a public institution, where journalists and commentators had a certain degree of protection and job security. In contrast, under privatization, capital treats media professionals much more harshly. If your views diverge from theirs, you can be dismissed at once. Therefore, the claim that privatization leads to more neutrality in the media is simply a myth.

What’s more, following privatization, French media have become increasingly less free. Today, regardless of the topic, media outlets seem to speak with one voice,

leaving little room for alternative or independent analysis. This is largely because the capital groups behind them have become more concentrated in the hands of a few major conglomerates. One of the most powerful among these is, of course, the well-known News Corporation owned by Rupert Murdoch.

Murdoch's News Corporation has infiltrated the media landscapes of various countries through a range of means. It first penetrated the U.S. media, then moved on to European media, and even attempted to gain influence in the Chinese media sector. Before coming to Shanghai, I had dinner in Beijing with a group of foreigners, including an Australian who had previously worked in the media. He told me that when Murdoch decided to marry Wendi Deng, a Chinese woman, it was a strategic move—a steppingstone intended to open doors into the Chinese media industry.

Clearly, this plan failed. Murdoch invested significant funds in China to persuade the Chinese government to open its media market and allow him to replicate the kind of control he exercised elsewhere. When that failed, so too did his marriage to Wendi Deng. All of these efforts were driven by capital interests and calculations. We often consume tabloid news without realizing the deeper motives behind such events. The belief that media controlled by capital is somehow more neutral than media controlled by the state is a thinking trap that feeds us completely fabricated narratives.

The second major trap—one that developing countries must be particularly cautious of—is the so-called “GDP trap” set by Western media. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a method for measuring economic size, only emerged in prominence during the 1980s. Prior to the 1970s, comparisons of national economies were typically made using Gross National Product (GNP) rather than GDP. The promotion of GDP was, in essence, a tactic to pressure developing countries into opening their markets to foreign investors. Once investment flowed in, the resulting economic activity would be counted as domestic output, thereby inflating GDP figures. This is the underlying logic behind the emphasis on GDP.

The problem with this approach is that, historically, when we spoke of economic size, we referred to industrial and agricultural output. But under the GDP framework, these sectors gradually lost their importance. Because developed countries have essentially transformed their economies into service-oriented, tertiary-sector-dominated systems, the tertiary sector has grown to an enormous size.

Today, the United States boasts a very high GDP, but more than 80% of it is attributed to the service sector. Within that, apart from finance, the legal sector—including litigation—has grown disproportionately. Yet from the standpoint of political economy, the actual contribution of such sectors to real economic value is

highly questionable. Real societal and economic value is generated by industrial and agricultural production. The service sector was originally intended to support and enhance those productive sectors. However, if services grow unchecked—like a cancer—they may end up draining the essence of industry and agriculture. As a result, the share of industry and agriculture shrinks, while services expand continuously. So even though GDP figures may appear impressive, they lack real significance.

The concept of GDP has, in effect, brainwashed much of the academic community, leading many developing countries—including China—to place undue faith in it. In truth, GDP is far from essential and holds little intrinsic significance. Yet this concept has indeed exerted widespread influence across the academic world, making it a classic thinking trap. Everyone seems to act in pursuit of GDP. If, in the future, all countries in the Global South are seduced by this illusion and chase after GDP growth figures, they may indeed achieve large nominal numbers—but with no real meaning. This is a trap we must consciously avoid in our economic development.

The third trap is the prevailing notion that one must choose between the market and the state. In English, this is often phrased as: *“There is a trade-off between the market and the state.”* But why must there be a forced choice between the two? This framing itself is a thinking trap. It imposes a mental presupposition that you can only choose one or the other.

Fortunately, China’s leaders have not been so dogmatic, although many of our scholars have fallen into this dichotomous mindset. Our leaders have relied more on their own intuition and pragmatism. They have advocated for a “both hands must be strong” approach, or what is often referred to as “walking on two legs.” This simple yet profound dialectic in Chinese philosophy means insisting on both market mechanisms and government intervention, without neglecting either. It is precisely by holding firmly to both that we can understand why China’s market economy has developed with relative stability, despite undergoing numerous crises. As Professor Wen Tiejun has pointed out, we have consistently found solutions amid crises. Had state intervention not been timely in those moments, we might not have been able to overcome those challenges.

The fourth trap lies in the way public opinion in developing countries is manipulated under the banner of “development”. This is a major trap set for China and other developing countries. In the past, it was generally recognized that development aid was a responsibility of developed nations—to help support the progress of developing countries. But if we look more closely at how that aid is being allocated today, we see a significant shift. Development aid was once directed toward building infrastructure and improving living standards in the developing

world. Now, however, developed countries are providing less and less aid—and increasingly refusing to channel it through the governments of developing nations.

They claim that the governments of developing countries are inefficient and corrupt and therefore redirect the funds to so-called civil society organizations instead of state institutions.

How is money funneled to so-called civil society? Of course, they provide direct financial support to the media—especially local media and local journalists. More significantly, they channel funds to local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), often distributing the money directly to the heads of local branches. Not long ago, I had dinner with a former leader of a Central Asian country, who told me that while the United States now offers substantial development aid to countries in Central Asia, none of it is given to their governments. Instead, it is directed entirely toward NGOs and media organizations. The purpose of this is to shape public opinion at the local level and use that public opinion to help pro-U.S. candidates rise to power through the electoral system. If the elected official turns out not to be someone aligned with U.S. interests, they can then use this same public opinion infrastructure to manipulate and control the situation—to incite color revolutions, overthrow legally elected governments, and install their own preferred leaders. This is why development aid today is no longer focused on infrastructure building in these countries. Instead, it is aimed at propping up NGOs and media organizations to serve political objectives. This, too, is a trap.

Finally, let's talk about the so-called “rules-based international order.” This notion exploits a basic human consensus: in any society or religion, people are expected to abide by laws and rules. It sounds reasonable and appeals to our shared values, which makes it easy to win sympathy and acceptance. People naturally assume we should all follow the rules. However, the reality is that most of these so-called “international rules” were established by Western powers in earlier eras—powers that were either colonial empires or imperialist states. These rules were created to entrench their monopoly and maintain long-term colonial control. Now, if you challenge or defy these rules, you are branded as “undisciplined” or “non-compliant.” All of these are thinking traps—constructs designed to hinder our continued development.

1.5.3 Deconstructing Western Global Discourse Hegemony Through Correct Localization Communication Strategies

• Speaker: Jin Zhongwei

• Year: 2023

I started my career in print journalism and have worked in the news and communication industry for over 30 years. Among the many sectors disrupted by the rise of the internet and digital technology, traditional journalism was among the first to be thoroughly upended. In Shanghai, a metropolis of over 24 million people, not a single newsstand remains. These kiosks, once a fixture for generations, have completely disappeared. Without newsstands, newspapers lose their ability to reach readers—and thus their viability. In this sense, Shanghai has perhaps taken the global lead in eliminating the print newspaper.

What we are experiencing is a communications revolution, one that has brought several significant changes. At the second World Internet Conference held in Wuzhen in 2015, General Secretary Xi Jinping attended the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote speech. I was fortunate to be there. In his address, he stated: “The principle of sovereign equality established by the UN Charter is a fundamental norm of contemporary international relations; its principles and spirit should also apply to cyberspace.” These words, delivered in front of internet moguls, IT giants, and venture capitalists from around the world, were powerful and clear. That was the first time I encountered the concept of “cyber sovereignty,” and it immediately struck me as significant. In the digital realm, the United States had moved swiftly to dominate, and its tech behemoths had monopolized much of the internet. These digital platforms have become colossal forces in cyberspace—so powerful that they, in some respects, even exceed the sovereignty of many nation-states. They wield tremendous power over other countries’ data security, public sentiment, and political orientation—and increasingly, they shape the ideological and spiritual lives of people abroad. But in 2015, it was China—through General Secretary Xi—that first formally introduced the concept of cyber sovereignty and took action accordingly. Today, China is perhaps the only country in the world that has developed digital platforms capable of competing with America’s tech monopolies.

In early 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping, in his remarks at the 12th collective study session of the Politburo, introduced the concept of “media by all,” identifying it as a new and significant challenge for China’s public communication. With nearly 1.1 billion internet users, China has entered an age where everyone can become a media outlet. Any ordinary person—once merely a newspaper reader—can now

possess one or several megaphones spanning multiple platforms. This represented the second major upheaval in the journalism and communication industry.

Thus, the digital revolution in the internet era has brought two unprecedented challenges to our profession. First is the rise of ultra-powerful platforms—so powerful that they transcend traditional notions of sovereignty. These platforms provide services and exert control over the flow of information on a scale far beyond that of traditional media. Second is the phenomenon of “media by all,” where each individual gains media power. This has dismantled the monopoly once held by elite outlets such as newspapers and redistributed media power through digital technologies.

What are the consequences? These massive platforms have essentially replaced the traditional postal system that once distributed newspapers and information products. I often describe them as the new “post office.” In the past, newspapers were printed and distributed to households via postal services, which also held all subscriber information. Today, that function has been taken over by platforms like Weibo, WeChat, Douyin, Kuaishou, and Bilibili. They distribute content from both media outlets and individual users through their platform networks to all audiences, while also maintaining full control over dynamic user data. In this sense, platforms have fully assumed the role of the postal system.

When Elon Musk acquired Twitter and rebranded it as X, what kind of power did he gain? Not only does he own his personal account—essentially his own newspaper—through which he broadcasts his views to 200 million followers every day, but he also holds the authority to decide who gets to speak on the platform. Twitter once abruptly shut down Donald Trump’s account with 70 million followers, citing no reason other than: the platform is privately owned, and we no longer wish to provide you access. That’s it. The platform held so much power that it was akin to the post office announcing it would no longer deliver a newspaper—effectively shutting it down. The silencing of Trump sent shockwaves around the world. Then—German Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned the move as “unacceptable,” but it made no difference. Such things cannot happen in China. As a country of socialism with Chinese characteristics, this falls within the realm of national sovereignty. You may own a major digital platform—like Li Yanhong or Zhang Yiming—with legal ownership, commercial value, and managerial rights. But you do not possess the sovereign powers that the platform generates: the handling of user data assets, data security, or the shaping of citizens’ consciousness. These powers belong to the state. Even when exercised by administrative bodies, they must follow due procedures. Of course, more robust regulations and new laws may still be needed. In recent years, China has undertaken a necessary “make-up class” in governing major platforms.

The concept of “cyber sovereignty” has deepened our understanding of internet platforms, marking China’s ongoing efforts to modernize internet governance in step with the times, while staying true to the principle of “not blindly copying foreign models.”

Therefore, the theme of today’s forum— “solidarity”—which calls on Global South media to unite against Western digital hegemony, is not sufficient. A foundational strategy must be in place: to build our own platforms. Take Guancha.cn, for example. Though we are a media outlet, we realized as early as 2017 that we also needed to become a platform. We began devoting effort to building one. First, we established a small community platform for our user base, sharing editorial rights so users could become part of our editorial process. Today, we have over 1.7 million real-name registered users from across the globe, who are tightly connected to our platform. Together, we produce content, forming what I call a “super editorial department”—comprising hundreds of thousands of “cognitively engaged participants.” Our content is not simply the product of a few dozen editors sitting in an office, but the result of collaboration with over a million citizen media workers. Our platform has internal mechanisms that elevate high-quality content aligned with our platform’s values and agenda, promoting it to prominent positions. Outstanding contributors gain visibility and build their own followings on Guancha.cn.

We’re grateful to the Shanghai Cyberspace Administration for their timely support, which helped us bring our innovations into compliance and establish a stable, homegrown platform. The influence we’ve cultivated is different from mere traffic volume. On this platform, we know who is reading, who is watching, and who is engaging. We understand why our users follow and support us. They don’t just have accounts on Guancha.cn—they also use platforms like Weibo, WeChat, Twitter, and YouTube. By participating in content curation and community engagement on our platform, their media literacy continues to grow, and their output becomes increasingly professional and influential. Users shape and influence one another, just as they do with our editors. These 1.7 million users help disseminate refined, value-aligned narratives from our platform to broader digital spaces. They can share and fight with others. Their impact far exceeds what any official account alone could achieve. This platform-based model has completely transformed our media practice.

Now look at the European Union: despite comprising so many developed countries, it does not have a single major digital platform of its own. Within less than three weeks of the Russia-Ukraine war breaking out, Europe’s cyberspace was transformed. Any European political figure or public personality who dared to defend Russia, or who merely spoke a few fair and historically grounded words from the standpoint of Europe’s own interests, was subjected to brutal online

attacks and faced serious repercussions. This happened because the major platforms used by Europeans are all owned by Americans. These platforms were able to orchestrate a campaign of moral terror against Russia across European cyberspace in just two weeks—without even having to declare wartime control. Former German Chancellors Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel, for example, were effectively silenced this way. Without its own digital platforms, the EU has no real cyber sovereignty. Its cyberspace is tragically akin to a digital colony of the United States. (Just imagine: if today's Arab world had its own sovereign digital platforms, the cries of the people in Gaza would not be so easily drowned out by pro-Israel narratives on Western platforms. Arab netizens would not have their worldview so deeply shaped by Western discourse hegemony. They would not remain confined to isolated individual perspectives, and solidarity would not be so hard to achieve.)

Our editorial department has over 100 staff, but only 10 are needed to operate the platform and serve more than 1.7 million active users—including offline activities where fans engage directly with our editors. Because we've opened part of the editorial rights, Guancha.cn now not only has hundreds of thousands or even millions of followers across other platforms, but also a wide alliance of supporters. Our core fans actively engage in other spaces as well, treating Guancha.cn as their basecamp. Some have been contributing content on our platform for two or three years—or even longer—before “graduating” to other venues, while new contributors keep flowing in every year. Guancha.cn operates like an internet university—open 24/7, never closed.

In recent years, Guancha.cn has brought together a large number of high-caliber scholars—such as Professors Jin Canrong, Zhang Weiwei, Shen Yi, and Lu Xinyu—who consistently produce quality content. At the same time, they have a strong sense of the internet and communicate in a down-to-earth, relatable style with netizens, actively shaping and influencing our user base. At the same time, our editors and platform users continuously shape one another through daily interactions: loyal fans often leave high-quality, thoughtful comments beneath each article, and editors respond in kind. This dynamic mechanism of mutual sharing and reciprocal shaping—among scholars, users, and editors; between users and editors; and among users themselves—is what enables a digital media platform to sustain the continuous output of high-quality content and services. It also constitutes the core of how a media platform should function.

In this era of digital revolution, Guancha.cn has been striving to forge a sustainable path for digital media—a model built on always being with our users and fans. What enables that connection is the platform itself. It provides us with a living source of

ideas and ensures our editors stay professionally engaged and emotionally attuned. Our work resonates with the real lives and sentiments of everyday people. It is grounded in the public's common sense and shaped by constant intellectual and emotional engagement online. This approach not only wins us market recognition but also ensures long-term viability. I call this the “super editorial department,” because when it functions well, it holds enormous, multifaceted potential. Over the past decade, Guancha's cognitive strength and combat capacity in confronting Western discourse hegemony and the entrenched monopoly of conventional online elites—what we call a “people's cyber warfare”—have primarily derived from this very model.

In recent years, our localized platform strategy has given us confidence in responding to the two major challenges brought about by the internet revolution. In the competition over public influence and the decade-long struggle over discourse, a localized platform strategy, once effective, offers the potential for success across the entire internet. **The internet operates dialectically—it is both local and global. A rise at the local level can trigger a rise at the global level. This is why Guancha.cn's localization strategy has enabled us to build a digital platform with unmatched influence across the broader internet landscape.**

Among Chinese media outlets, Guancha.cn and the Global Times are the two most frequently cited by mainstream Western media. Although often labeled “nationalist,” we are not concerned by such tags. As long as they cite us—even glance in our direction—they are already being influenced by us. The reason we are frequently referenced is that we have a strong and loyal following across the Chinese internet. In other words, we possess discursive representativeness, which translates into real influence. That's why they pay attention to us. It's no different from why our editorial team keeps an eye on The New York Times—because it holds significant sway in the United States, and its readership has a broad influence. So whatever it says, we pay attention. The same logic applies in reverse: Guancha.cn has an influential user base in China. With such a large number of devoted followers, whenever a major news event occurs, Western mainstream media will look to see “what we have to say.” Even if they stigmatize or label us, we don't mind. This is precisely what we mean when we speak of a locally grounded platform strategy: drawing energy from a vibrant, organic relationship with our user community. Like fish in the sea, we do not care what others call us—we swim freely in our own waters.

In fact, building such a platform is not costly and requires only modest investment. As long as you can attract enough influential global scholars and dedicated followers, you can create a distinctive platform that shares a degree of autonomy

with its users. At Guancha.cn, our editorial staff is small and young, but our scholars and fans come from around the world, representing all ages and walks of life. Across the entire Chinese internet, leading knowledge communities and opinion leaders from various sectors gather here. Thus, a localized platform strategy and the generation of influence across the broader web go hand in hand. Without such a strategy, your media outlet will remain merely an account on someone else's platform, with your fate controlled by others. For today's Global South media, without a strategy for localization and without sovereign control of major platforms, your voice and influence will inevitably be confined to the bounds of what Western monopolistic platforms permit. To rely on their benevolence and inclusivity is neither equal dialogue nor true sharing—and certainly not real resistance.

1.5.4 Shifting Chinese Perceptions of Africa Through Media Lenses

• Speaker: Mu Tao

• Year: 2023

The Chinese perception of Africa and its people have undergone an evolution—from simplistic to more comprehensive, and from emotional to more rational.

I. Ancient Chinese Perceptions of Africa

Accurate records of Africa in ancient China began with the *Jingxing Ji* (《经行记》), a travelogue written by Du Huan during the Tang Dynasty. In AD 751, the Tang Dynasty clashed with the Arab Empire in the Battle of Talas. Du Huan, who served in the Tang army, was taken captive after its defeat and spent over a decade in regions spanning Central Asia, West Asia, and North Africa. His *Jingxing Ji* documented his experiences, including descriptions of the people of “Molin Country,” noting their dark skin and living habits: “The people are black and wild in manner. There is little rice or wheat, no grass or trees. Horses eat dried fish, and people eat hulmang.” Hulmang refers to Persian dates. The place is plagued by deadly miasma and epidemics. Scholars have identified “Molin Country” as present-day Mogadishu in Somalia. By the 12th century, during the Southern Song Dynasty, records of Africa had extended further south to what is now Zanzibar. One entry noted: “The local products include elephant tusks and rhinoceros horns. There are also many wild people on the islands, their skin black as lacquer and hair curly. They are lured with food, captured in great numbers—sometimes tens of thousands—and sold as ‘fan slaves’ (蕃奴).”

In the early 15th century, Admiral Zheng He of the Ming Dynasty led seven expeditions to the Western Seas, visiting the East African coast on four occasions. His companions—Ma Huan, Fei Xin, and Gong Zhen—produced detailed accounts of these regions in works such as *Yingya Shenglan* (《瀛涯胜览》), *Xingcha Shenglan* (《星槎胜览》), and *Xiyang Fanguo Zhi* (《西洋番国志》). The accounts offered more detailed descriptions of the East African coast, focusing primarily on coastal city-states in Egypt, Somalia, and Kenya. For example, Fei Xin’s *Xingcha Shenglan* describes Mogadishu (then known as Mugutushu) as follows: “Men wear their hair in four braids hanging down and wrap cloth around their waists. Women coil their hair on top of their heads, lacquer it to shine, wear multiple strings of beads from their ears, silver rings on their necks, and tasseled pendants on their chests. When going out, they use single cloths for covering, wear veils of blue gauze, and leather shoes on their feet.”

Particularly noteworthy is the *Da Ming Hun Yi Tu* (Amalgamated Map of the Ming Empire), completed in 1389 during the Ming Dynasty. It reflects a rudimentary understanding of African geography, portraying the continent as an inverted triangle, with the general course of the Nile River and a central region featuring large lakes. The map also shows a large lake at the center of the African continent, which may have been drawn based on Arab legends. According to these accounts, “farther south beyond the Sahara Desert lies a vast lake, far larger than the Caspian Sea.” The Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa is also depicted, with finely rendered coastlines and a distinctly recognizable geographic outline.

II. Shifts in Chinese Perceptions of Africa During the Late Qing Period

Compared to ancient times, Chinese perceptions of Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries underwent notable changes. As globalization accelerated and exchanges between China and other countries increased, Chinese media—especially newspapers and books—began offering more extensive coverage of Africa. Two major shifts can be observed in this period:

First, intellectuals in the late Qing Dynasty began to link China’s fate with that of Africa, recognizing that both regions suffered under colonial domination and oppression by Western powers. Newspapers such as *Waijiao Bao* (《外交报》), *Qingyi Bao* (《清议报》), *Dongfang Zazhi* (《东方杂志》), and *Shen Bao* (《申报》, 1872–1949) played a notable role in disseminating information about Africa. Notably, these media outlets provided relatively in-depth analyses of Africa’s 19th-century reform and self-strengthening movements, including Muhammad Ali’s reforms in Egypt. They also offered focused coverage of Ethiopia’s war of resistance against Italian invasion and the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa.

III. Media Enthusiasm for Africa in the 1950s–1980s

Amid the backdrop of the global Cold War, Chinese media in the 1950s—such as *People’s Daily*, various other newspapers, and China National Radio—primarily focused on covering the African national independence movements. During key historical moments—including the 1955 Bandung Conference, Premier Zhou Enlai’s visit to Africa in 1963, and the construction of the TAZARA Railway in the early 1970s—Africa received enthusiastic and extensive media coverage. At the same time, numerous publications about Africa’s general situation and independence movements were issued in large numbers. These included: *Africa: From Darkness to Dawn* by Wu Bingzhen (New Knowledge Press, 1956), *The Egyptian People’s Struggle for Independence and Peace* by Wu Xiu (Popular Reading Press, 1956), *Chronicles of African Nations* (World Affairs Press, 1957), *The National Liberation*

Struggles in Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria by Fan Yong (Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1957), and *The Algerian People's National Liberation Struggle* by Yan Jin (World Affairs Press, 1958).

In April 1961, Chairman Mao Zedong, during a meeting with a group of African friends, stated: "As for me, I don't know much about Africa. We should set up an institute for African studies to research its history, geography, and socio-economic conditions. Our understanding of Africa's past, present, and geographic location is quite limited, so we really need a simple and clear book—not too long, perhaps just 100 to 200 pages. We can ask our African friends to help and aim to publish it within a year or two. The content should explain how imperialism came to Africa, how it oppressed the people, how the people resisted, how those resistances failed, and how they are now rising again." This statement directly led to the establishment of dedicated research institutions and the training of professionals in African studies.

In July 1961, the Institute of West Asian and African Studies was established. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, a series of works on African countries and regions, as well as biographies of African leaders, were translated and published. Initially printed for internal use among officials, these books were later made available to the general public, further deepening Chinese understanding of Africa. In terms of mass communication, widely circulated documentaries such as *TAZARA Railway* and *Chinese Doctors in Tanzania*, along with the 1973 comedic crosstalk *Ode to Friendship* by Ma Ji and Tang Jizhong, became household names. These works elevated the China-Africa friendship to a higher level and cemented the perception of Africans as "brothers" and "friends" for the Chinese people.

IV. A Comprehensive Understanding of Africa Since the 1990s

Since the 1990s, with the deepening of China's reform and opening-up and the intensified Sino-African exchanges—particularly the rapid development of economic and trade relations—Chinese media coverage of Africa has surged, resulting in an explosion of publications, online articles, and short videos. Consequently, public understanding of Africa is no longer fragmented or one-dimensional; it has evolved into a more multi-faceted and comprehensive perspective.

In speeches, writings, and academic works from both government and scholarly circles, **there has been a broadly optimistic and positive view of Africa's role in contemporary international politics and economics—particularly its support for China's core interests on the global stage, the prospects for Africa's development, and the current state of China-Africa relations. Research on Africa has become increasingly in-depth, leading to the formulation of the**

concept of a “China-Africa community with a shared future” as a vision for future cooperation.

However, at the societal level, certain negative perceptions of Africa—especially sub-Saharan Africa—continue to persist. Reports have at times exaggerated issues such as poverty, underdevelopment, the prevalence of diseases like HIV/AIDS, and ongoing conflicts. With the rapid growth of China-Africa interactions, particularly among the general populations, discrepancies in perception have occasionally resulted in friction—especially in the age of the internet.

Therefore, it is the unshirkable responsibility of scholars, the media, and related sectors to promote objective publicity and reporting on Africa, so that the public may gain an accurate and objective understanding of the continent. The same applies in reverse.

1.6 Digital Sovereignty: The Global South's New Bandung Moment

1.6.1 From Critical Minerals to Critical Data: The Global South's Path to Digital Sovereignty

- Speaker: Kambale Musavuli

- Year: 2025

We'll try to discuss something that's very near to me. I'm passionate about tech, but I'm also passionate about Congo. There is something happening in the world about mineral resources and digital space. We lack a full understanding of what we say when we're talking about the digital space. It's becoming much more clear to me as I'm talking to people who may not be interested in the tech space; how do we explain why this is important?

You're in a digital space. It's a territory. Around the 1950s, when people met particularly in Bandung, they said that we needed to exert sovereignty. The reason why they did so is because they felt that the countries, the lands and the governance of the country were not in their control. Therefore, they needed to find a way to come together to gain independence and sovereignty. There's something happening in the digital space. The digital space is a territory. Who owns that space? You say it's a free space, while people have territory somewhere; some are still grappling with it, but they are holding some space. So, you are in the digital space. What do you control? If you do not control anything, others will determine the affairs of your digital space. As in an independent country, we want to control our affairs. If we understand it from this perspective, it helps us understand why digital sovereignty matters. It defines everything that we do, from healthcare decisions to even security of a country, and even how you govern.

The second point I want to make is that there are a few people, corporations, and specific countries that control the digital space. There is concentrated power, mostly held by big techs companies, mostly from Silicon Valley. But now, for those of us on the African continent, we want to lift up Kwame Nkrumah. In that space, as we're looking at who controls what, what do we have to do? Do we need to follow a certain path? We say we need to look east, not west. We're looking forward. The reason why we have to look forward is because we have to leapfrog into the space, learning from the best practices that exist, so that we can have a solution that is better for our people on the continent.

I spoke about the meeting in 1955. Countries decided to show up in Bandung – Zhou Enlai, Nasser, Nkrumah, and others – as they were thinking about political

independence. We have happened to be in Beijing seventy years later. So why were we here in Beijing discussing Bandung in the context of digital sovereignty? Just as they grappled with the question of political independence, one of the most pressing questions today is who owns our data? Who benefits? It is even much more urgent now for communities. As data is our wealth, we need to regain control over that data.

However, data is still abstract. What makes it actually work? It's the mineral foundation. The minerals from the African continent. The African continent has most of the critical minerals. The DRC, where I am from, holds about 70% of the world's cobalt, an essential mineral needed for electric vehicles, for data centers, for even the AI race. However, in that extraction of minerals, there is no benefit for the Congolese people.

As we think about building a just world and even achieving digital sovereignty, we also have to ensure resource sovereignty. Even as we start thinking about the global competition on who is going to be advanced in the AI race, you will notice the US secures access to critical resources. When you think about what's happening in Venezuela in terms of the US needing to control the oil, you will think about the DRC, as it has signed a \$3 trillion agreement with the United States. Let me repeat it, not 1 billion, not 2 billion, not 10 billion, but \$3 trillion worth of our resources in exchange for peace with the United States. They are securing the resources. We have to make sure as we are mobilizing along digital sovereignty. We are supporting those who are fighting to make sure that the flow of resources benefits the people first, as Lumumba fought for before he was assassinated.

There is data flow – just as with the colonial era of exploitation, data flows the same way. Human beings create data. As the data is generated, it is extracted. The extraction means your data is ending up in a server somewhere. That's how you need to understand that extraction. You created it, it ends up in the data center somewhere. When it's in the data center, what happens? Value is created. That data is used to train AI models. The AI models become smarter and smarter, and products are created from that. When the final product is created, those who actually created the data don't have any benefit from that. It's one of the smartest forms of theft of the 21st century. All of us produce the data freely. We don't know that it has value. We've been convinced that data has no value when it actually does. When ordinary people realize that – wait a minute, we are back in 1885 as they carved up the African continent, took these resources – we start demanding that we must control how the data is extracted, where it is located, and who is going to benefit from it.

I strongly believe that in this era of AI, Africa has a unique opportunity to engage with the Global South in a particular framework, which will be to encourage African governments and countries in the Global South to operate under the BRICS framework. There is a BRICS AI Centre here in Shanghai that brings together scholars, academics, institutions, discussing the way forward in the digital space. Africa has the resources. Africa has a young population that's generating data, is culturally diverse. There can be easy growth in terms of advances in AI. If we are operating under the framework of BRICS, we'll be able to learn from one another.

I'll use an example of what we are doing in Ghana. There are a few developers in Ghana. They are working in the Ghana Natural Language Processing Group. They have built a translator that is much more powerful than Google Translate, but you probably are unaware it. Young developers in Ghana have a better language translator than Google Translate. They are undermined by Google in a crowd. Everywhere I go, I keep lifting up their name so that you can actually test it – the Twi. What they are actually doing has an impact. No one knows about them. Working with those on the ground who are building local solutions in AI is critical.

Beyond this technical work, we have launched an initiative called 'Beyond AI' in Ghana, really based on the fact that in November of last year, Ghana adopted a national AI strategy. The gap that we noticed is that we have technocrats and geeks discussing AI, while the vast majority of people do not know what is happening with AI. We wanted to have community engagement. How do we bring the discussion of AI to the ordinary people of Ghana? For example, one of our events was titled 'What does AI have to do with the price of Kenkey?' Kenkey is a food from Ghana – like fufu, it's a type of starch food. We just had a discussion with ordinary people. What we found out was very fascinating. The perspective of ordinary citizens as it relates to AI, how do we use it? We also do workshops during the event. There was a young woman who has a business, and she found out that with the AI model, she can create a flyer. She didn't want to leave the workshop without the flyer for her business. That was the workshop that she participated in. The second aspect is also a literacy project to lift up the question of data. We strongly believe that Africa's data is the most precious resource that's needed for this AI race, because Africa holds a particular position on our data. While we may teach people how to use AI models, we are coming back to educating and engaging communities in the question of data governance. Lastly, it's also about engaging our legislators – one of our legislators is here. We are engaging with legislators, particularly considering that right now in Ghana, we have 13 bills just for the digital space all happening at the same time. It's how we can also have input with legislators about what is happening. You can do things like Beyond AI, engaging people affected by AI to let them have an input in the implementation strategy in their countries.

I'll turn to share thoughts on digital sovereignty, specifically one of the vulnerabilities that we have. Last year in 2024, millions of Africans were disconnected from the internet, including in Ghana. The reason why it happened is because one of the subsea cables was cut off; we don't control these subsea cables. As that happened, it should have raised an alarm for many people in Ghana and Africa that we have no control whatsoever over our digital space.

Something happened last month. Many developers who build applications on Amazon were affected when AWS went offline. Some of you may not know that it happened, but this affected a lot of developers. So we keep seeing cases where we do engage in the digital space, but something happens, and we have no control. But how do we make sure that this doesn't happen again?

That's the vision that I want to present. The Digital Bandung Vision, an idea coming from Malaysia surprisingly. We have heard more about it from John. We met in August with a few intellectuals and academics, discussing what would be the way forward for the world today as we think about digital sovereignty. From the African perspective, we believe that we will have to learn from the world, but we also have to share what we have with the world.

There are some technical standards in China that we are learning every time we come here. African countries have to participate in, even create our policy. We have to invest in the infrastructure, but it's not as simple as saying 'let's go in and just build infrastructure.' We have to leverage the Belt and Road Initiative 2.0. China is engaging on the African continent, developing roads and infrastructure. Can we have a better Belt and Road Initiative 2.0 that invests in the key infrastructure where Africans are benefiting from the digital space?

We have to negotiate as a continent, as a bloc. What the United States is doing is going country by country – each country with a different deal. Ghana may not be speaking with Côte d'Ivoire, but the United States is engaging with these two governments, signing the same deal that is affecting the continent. African countries have to engage as a bloc as they negotiate with big tech or anyone who would like to engage in the African continent.

Knowledge sharing is critical. Every time I come back, you've heard me already mention the BRICS AI Centre. When I was there, I was very impressed by the advances that are taking place here in China related to AI. I hope that when we come to China again, we will learn from it, building relations with mutual respect and dignity to transform our continent and have an impact in the Global South.

Thank you.

1.6.2 The Digital Silk Road from the Perspectives of Malaysia and ASEAN

• Speaker: John Pang

• Year: 2025

I'll begin with some general comments before moving to more specific remarks, to situate the significance of digital sovereignty, AI sovereignty, and how these issues are unfolding in the international order, particularly in the case of U.S. policy towards individual countries. This will have implications for our strategy as members of the Global South.

First, some general remarks that still need to be made. Despite the fact that this panel focuses on AI sovereignty, I want to stress that AI sovereignty is an order of magnitude more significant than digital sovereignty. It is increasingly sovereignty; simpliciter, just sovereignty. It is eventually going to be how sovereignty is exercised, how our humanity is exercised. It will govern the three-dimensional world instead of merely a 'space.' We are used to thinking in terms of 'cyberspace' as a metaphor, but AI will govern the 3D world. It is agency, intelligence, action, and history. It will make our history if we allow it to, and because it shapes our history, it will shape our future – either we humanize it, or it will dehumanize and enslave us; either we socialize and collectivize it, or it will divide, atomize, and colonize. There are no IFs or BUTs about this, because we have already seen us losing the wave out of complacency, whether in Africa, Asia, Europe, or Latin America. The first wave of digital dominance of U.S. platforms and social media is something we are already fighting a rearguard action against.

Now we face a new and far more powerful challenge. I want to stress the power of this. Roy and Jeff also demonstrated what can be done with this technology. Digital platforms amplified human-created messages. AI, by contrast, autonomously generates and deploys persuasive agents, with the threat of influencing the political landscape of a nation by foreign actors, troll farms, regime change, etc. The digital platform was just amplifying human-created content with a limited scale. In contrast, the AI model will generate synthetic, hyper-realistic, infinitely variable disinformation – through texts, images, videos, and audios – at near-zero marginal cost. It can deploy millions of autonomous persuasive agents simultaneously that do not merely broadcast a message, but conduct unique one-on-one conversations, tailored to each individual. It will know each individual far more deeply than current technology. This is the industrialization of personalized persuasion.

We have even seen how, in places like Gaza, AI has been used for industrialized one-on-one assassination on a mass scale. This is extremely serious. AI shifts economic

power from data extraction to agency automation. Losing digital sovereignty means foreign entities will control our platforms; losing AI sovereignty means imperial powers, especially the US, will control the agents that generate our culture, commerce, and automate decisions at every level of society. This is a fundamental transfer of national and individual autonomy. This is where a major part of the struggle for world order is being fought.

Let me turn to the really down and dirty details. I'm embarrassed to talk about it as a Malaysian, but my country serves as a cautionary tale for what can happen. Malaysia is actually a leader in the Global South in sovereign applications of digital technology and a key node in global semiconductor supply chains – as the second-largest exporter of semiconductors to the U.S., and as a big partner of China. It is a contested territory in the international order.

Malaysia recently signed a reciprocal trade agreement with the U.S. This agreement is exceptionally unequal and unconventional for a sovereign country. It is the sort of agreement you do not find outside of an occupied country, and you will never find anything like this even if you search online. If you do a textual analysis, you will find conservatively 104 commitments made by Malaysia to the U.S. – not mere concessions, but commitments to comply with U.S. security perspectives, sanctions, and trade restrictions. The U.S., on the other hand, makes four commitments – basically just one: not to increase tariffs. This takes up the entire place. Malaysia's tariff level is already around 19.10%; in exchange for the U.S. not increasing tariffs, Malaysia gives up a bunch of rights, particularly digital sovereignty, as written in section (3) of the Agreement.

This is coming for the rest of us, because this battle is material, real, and is in the 3D world. If we fall out in trade, you can see how a certain template was deployed in Malaysia. The same template was presented to other Southeast Asian countries, and will likely be presented to Ghana if it hasn't already been. I want to encourage you to read the agreement that is publicly available on the White House site, includes a bunch of commitments in paper, such as no regulation of DNS that would allow Malaysia to block or redirect U.S. sites; giving up the right to retain data domestically; consulting the U.S. before entering digital agreements with a 'third country' – guess which third country?

There are two general models for AI development today, and only two places with the technological power to develop frontier models and full ecosystems: the U.S. and China. They offer radically different visions for AI deployment. The U.S. has bet its economy on AI – its stock market is dominated by seven companies tied to ChatGPT and Nvidia. AI is also central to its geopolitical strategy. There is a deep cultural

issue in the Western imagination – a drive to construct a kind of digital god, pouring resources into data centers without clarity of purpose, believing that this god will emerge and dominate. The Chinese model is different – industrial, embedded, material, augmenting human capabilities and societies, tied to a certain political economy and legal order.

Malaysia had strong legal protections and was a pioneer in building institutions for AI governance. I myself helped organize a digital agreement between China and Malaysia during President Xi's visit in April, involving equal, collaborative proposals from the National Development and Reform Commission – harmonizing digital standards, AI governance principles, etc. It is still in the middle of developing a national AI strategy, yet this agreement dismantles the digital services tax on U.S. companies, blocks data localization and sovereign cloud policies, prevents mandating local tech development, surrenders control over critical infrastructure, and cedes control over national DNS traffic. It grants the U.S. veto power over Malaysia's digital agreements with more than 30 countries.

Malaysia is a key node in multilateralism contested area, and also the chair of ASEAN, unfortunately. It is central to the region's multilateral order and security architecture. This is the principle of ASEAN centrality. Malaysia could have played an important role in helping the Global South move towards a multipolar order, and it has been exemplary in digital protections and asserting provisions in data protection, AI sovereignty, and digital sovereignty, etc. For example, we have abolished the additional tax on transactions with U.S. companies; we adopted Huawei and ZTE for telecommunications infrastructure in the second round of negotiation last year whilst they were excluded under pressure in the first run.

All that is in jeopardy and in doubt because of this agreement. Provisions weaponize trade agreements and tariffs for a particular geopolitical purpose. To be fair to the government, they claim we are not bound and that exit clauses exist, but making 104 commitments in such an agreement is at the very least shameful, and a counterexample to what we want for the Global South. So, take a look at the document, and I hope we can have a chance to discuss it here. The agreement also forces alignment with U.S. unilateral security policies: Malaysia must adopt equally restrictive measures whenever the U.S. does, and must align with all U.S. export controls, preventing any 'backfilling' or 'undermining' of those controls. The battle for AI and digital sovereignty is extremely contested. Unless we assert sovereignty collectively, we will be taken out one by one, as Malaysia nearly has been. I do not think this is the end of the story, but it is a cautionary tale. Malaysia's entire way of life – and Southeast Asia's – is inconsistent with this. Yet this still happened. We are

clearly in the midst of a struggle, and I want all of us to wake up to its nature. It is not an easy world outside China.

Let me end quickly with Bandung. It reminds us of what sovereignty means for the Global South: it is not Western sovereignty, as defined or invented by European countries; it is asserted in the teeth of imperialism. If you don't understand what it is asserted against, you cannot understand why sovereignty is meaningful to the Global South. Bandung also reminds us, 50 years after its launch, that sovereignty must be asserted collectively. One by one, our countries are not strong enough. Malaysia was an exemplary case. If you just read the agreement, which is not the entire story about Malaysia, it looks as though Malaysia has been taken out of the game.

Thank you very much.

1.6.3 Digital Sovereignty for the Masses

- Speaker: Tica Moreno

- Year: 2025

My task here is made easier after the four previous interventions, because I speak from our experience as popular organizations and movements in the Global South, specifically in Brazil. We have increasingly understood the challenge of building a consistent, solid, and massive political agenda around artificial intelligence and what we call popular digital sovereignty in Brazil.

To share our political construction process, it is important to remember that, in our countries, those who are part of popular movements often have as their only means of connection to the internet a cell phone that works only with free data from Facebook and other corporations. Therefore, we deal with this issue under very unfavorable conditions. Artificial intelligence, as we have seen in this panel, is one of the central disputes of our times. In the current situation, it is not possible to treat it as a technology detached from contemporary geopolitical disputes or reduce it to the world of chatbots, where each person enters, asks a question or gives an instruction in a prompt, and receives a response that may be good, useful, or a complete statistically based hallucination.

The empire and China know that what is at stake in this dispute is the ability to direct the development and course of humanity. And the truth is that just because China is a player in this dispute with the United States and is in a position to win this battle allows us in the Global South to consider that artificial intelligence may serve our peoples. The Chinese experience shows how this is possible, demonstrating that AI really needs to be understood as part of the new quality of productive forces. Not only does it accelerate existing production processes, but it also has the potential to qualitatively transform social relations, the way we interact with each other, with our work, and with the tools and work processes that produce our livelihoods.

Two weeks ago, we met in Brazil with comrades from the World March of Women, a movement of which I am a part, the MST (Landless Workers' Movement), and Baobab (International Association for Popular Cooperation) in a process of popular education and the construction of an artificial intelligence for agrarian reform and agroecology, called IARRA. This is part of a strategy to popularize agroecology in Brazil and the beginning of an understanding among our organizations that we must also popularize artificial intelligence, placing our needs and the people at the center of its development.

This is only possible because we understand that artificial intelligence is caught between two historical possibilities. On the one hand, there is the progressive potential to transform human capacities and social relations, as demonstrated by the Chinese experience of integrating AI into society as a whole, from planning and innovation in the production chain to the organization of cities, the countryside, agriculture, and even the care of the elderly in this demographic transition. China does all this with regulation, planning, open source, and sovereignty.

On the other hand, there is the concrete risk of the artificial intelligence project led by the Big Tech companies of US imperialism in its decadent and dangerous stage. In this project, AI has the reach of weapons of mass destruction, part of the military-industrial complex, to which the Big Tech companies of Silicon Valley are now subject. AI has this characteristic of dual use. John Pang has already talked about this, its use by people and its use by the military. We see the example of the genocide of the Palestinian people perpetrated by Israel, where Google is part of the AI program that automatically directs attacks on Palestinian homes, causing mass murders.

For us in Brazil and the Global South, the possibility of entering this battle, of building digital sovereignty, necessarily involves understanding that we are not in the best conditions. With the alliance between Big Tech and the Trump administration, we have faced pressure against national legislation attempting to regulate and protect data. We suffer threats and tariffs when we try to regulate platforms in a minimally autonomous manner, whether in the area of digital work platforms or to restrict the political use of data by social media platforms, considering how they modulate behavior and interfere in electoral processes in our country, where we face the extreme right on a daily basis.

Brazil is more structurally dependent on foreign technologies, and we lack a strategic national project, not only in the digital sphere. We do not invest in our own digital infrastructure and hire Big Tech companies for everything. It is conservatively estimated that last year the Brazilian government paid 10 billion reais in software licenses, cloud solutions, and security applications to foreign corporations such as Microsoft, Google, and Red Hat. At the same time, the Brazilian Artificial Intelligence Plan proposes to invest twice that amount, 23 billion reais, over four years. It is laughable. What our country proposes to do and has not even gotten off the ground with this AI plan.

The case of Brazilian healthcare is exemplary of this dependence. The public healthcare system has undergone a digital transformation where access to services occurs via a digital application developed by the government, generating a massive

collection of data from the population, all health data, now and before, on the health of the Brazilian population. However, this data is stored in the Amazon cloud, a service for which we pay dearly. In turn, Amazon uses this data to train its models and develop its AI system, which is then sold back to Brazil and the South. Once again, we are left with no choice but to acquire ready-made technologies, renouncing our capacity and potential to develop our own science and technology, a situation already theorized in the 1980s by Marxist dependency theorists. We have given up on the idea that it is possible for us to effectively enter this competition.

In addition to exporting minerals and data, we seek to understand how countries in the South are subordinate to and dependent on US Big Tech in the eight layers of digital infrastructure: the four layers of physical infrastructure (energy, telecommunications, hardware/equipment, and data centers) and the four logical layers (software, systems development, databases, and AI). In Brazil, we have identified the dominance of transnational corporations based in the Global North in all these layers, as a result of the privatization of physical infrastructure in the 1990s and insufficient investment in research and development of the logical layers in Brazil.

Therefore, digital sovereignty cannot have "digital" as just an adjective; it must be linked to a project of national and popular sovereignty, necessarily composed of energy, mineral, technological, and food sovereignty. We cannot reproduce high-tech territories in contrast to territories where common goods such as energy are extracted.

Digital sovereignty is a controversial concept. Big Tech companies, mainly Google, Amazon, and Microsoft, sell "sovereignty as a service," focusing only on data location (sovereign cloud), a trap into which Brazil has already fallen. This path is made possible by the European Union's vision of digital sovereignty, which focuses on individual privacy, ignoring data as a factor of production. In the Chinese approach, which guides us, data is a crucial factor of production for a new quality of productive forces and, as a factor of production, has a unique feature: it can be used simultaneously by multiple actors and agents, its value increases with scale, and it has the generative capacity to produce new realities, knowledge, and possibilities.

By defending control over data, we are defending life as a whole, territories, modes of production, and the possibility of a shared future for humanity. In accordance with the proposal developed within the BRICS Civil Council, we identify that popular digital sovereignty does not reduce sovereignty to a legal status to be achieved but affirms sovereignty as a continuous exercise of popular power. Just as we defend regional integration in Latin America, digital sovereignty requires solidarity,

reciprocity, and complementarity in processes of regional integration and South-South cooperation. These are impulses for our sovereignty, conditions of possibility, because we will not emerge from this situation of subordination and dependence alone, in one country, starting now. The sharing of networks and infrastructure must be treated as a political issue, not just a technical one.

We place this agenda within the struggles we are already waging: we affirm technological diversity and resist the standardization and homogenization of ways of life; we argue that peoples need to be subjects of technological development, not just users of ready-made technological packages; we affirm that public funding for research and innovation in AI and digital technologies in general needs to be guided by the development of free and open-source technologies, effectively controlled by the state and the people. We also defend the need for mass training through popular digital education and the development of just transition policies in the face of automation by working-class organizations.

Finally, we reflect that this battle will not be won with expert speeches or good arguments alone. We need to take this agenda to every space, to every corner of the streets, the suburbs, and the countryside, integrating it into the political agenda of popular movements and left-wing organizations. Only then will we be able to change the balance of power and, together with China as part of the Global South, affirm socialism and definitively defeat the empire.

1.6.4 Orderly Innovation: China's Approach to AI Regulation

- Speaker: Zheng Ge

- Year: 2025

I believe that solidarity should be the basis for us to successfully achieve digital sovereignty. Because I myself is a legal expert and law professor, my speech will focus on law but I will use ordered innovation to describe China's approach to AI regulation.

Throughout the world, there is a typical saying that there are three models of AI-related law. One book *Digital Empires -- The Global Battle to Regulate Technology*, written by Anu Bradford, law professor at Columbia Law School, shows the three types of models. First, the United States mainly pioneers a "market-driven model". China is considered a "state-driven model" and EU a "rights-driven model". When we are talking about digital sovereignty, we need to consider the role of the state in the whole scenario. For me, this typology is based on ideology rather than detailed analysis of the legal system in different countries. For me, EU is not a rights-oriented system. Actually, AI Act anchors to TFEU Art.114, which considered market harmonization, namely the single market within EU as its major legislative objective. EU actually shows a risk-aversion model. The United States shouldn't be considered as a market-based model because there is no law on the federal level in the United States to protect, for example, personal information. All the laws made by the Federal Congress of the United States related to AI have been targeting at its competitors. But now, the competitor from the perspective of United States would always be China. We know the Tik Tok Law used national security as the general justification for its legislation. The United States may not have laws to protect its citizens in the digital world or to deal with specific problems arising from the digital period. All the laws in the United States on the federal level related to digital technology have been targeting at foreign countries on the basis of the so-called national security.

Table 1: Global Artificial Intelligence-Related Legislation Models[↵]

<i>Mode</i> [↵]	<i>Core Value Orientation</i> [↵]	<i>Legislative Goals</i> [↵]	<i>Primary Legislative Tools & Features</i> [↵]	<i>Representative Practices & Cases</i> [↵]
China Model [↵]	Ordered Innovation [↵]	Balancing technological development and risk control, enhancing industrial competitiveness [↵]	Progressive legislation, local experimental rules (e.g., fault-tolerant mechanisms), phased planning; emphasizing public-private collaboration and institutional flexibility [↵]	<i>Next-Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan</i> (Three-Step Strategy), local regulations (e.g., Shenzhen's <i>AI Industry Promotion Ordinance</i>) [↵]
U.S. Model [↵]	Pan-Securitization [↵]	Maintaining technological hegemony, addressing geopolitical challenges [↵]	Domestic light-touch regulation (relying on industry self-regulation and soft law), external hardline sanctions (export controls and investment screening); security exception mechanisms [↵]	<i>CHIPS and Science Act</i> (technology blockade), <i>Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act</i> (foreign investment screening) [↵]
EU Model [↵]	Risk Aversion [↵]	Minimizing social risks, safeguarding fundamental rights [↵]	Preemptive preventive rules (high-risk classification), mandatory compliance (e.g., impact assessments), ethics-driven legislation; emphasizing regulatory redundancy [↵]	GDPR (Data Protection Impact Assessment), AI Act (four-tier risk classification and prohibited list) [↵]

The concept of national security in the United States is different from that in all the other countries, where national security is used to defend their own sovereignty. But in the United States, national security is to maintain its supremacy or dominance in the world. Therefore, the concept of national security of the United States is damaging world peace. Therefore, I would say the US model is a pan-securitization one, namely, using national security to do anything.

II. Core Value Orientations		
Model	Driving Logic	Key Mechanism
EU	Risk Aversion	• "Dangerous product" classification • Ex-post fines over innovation incentives
US	National Security Hegemony	• H.R.1's state preemption clauses • Algorithmic warfare export controls
China	Ordered Innovation	• Staged legislation (2020/2025/2030) • Fault-tolerant local rules • Ethics-by-design (Art.14 GenAI Measures)

The Chinese model shouldn't be considered as "state-dominant". We found out that although China has yet to make a law called "AI Law," it actually started to draft the AI law 2 years ago and has postponed the making of that law. But if we look upon Chinese laws, we found a comprehensive system of AI-related laws. First of all, we have three laws targeting digital technology. One is the Cyberspace Security Law made in 2017. The other two laws were both made in 2021; they are the Personal Information Protection Law and Data Security Law. And below these laws, there are a number of regulations dealing with every aspect of digital technology and AI specifically. For example, China made regulations on recommendation algorithms, deep synthetic algorithms, and generative AI. Therefore, in China, we found a comprehensive system of laws related to AI in order to protect different legal interest, from personal rights, to national security, and to innovation.

Category ⁴²	Core Content ⁴²	Representative Cases/Examples ⁴²	Key Features ⁴²
Technology-Specific Regulation⁴²	Classified supervision of AI technologies/applications, emphasizing entity accountability and dynamic adjustment. ⁴²	<i>Internet Information Service Algorithmic Recommendation Management Provisions</i> (2021), <i>Deep Synthesis Management Provisions</i> (2022), <i>Generative AI Service Management Measures</i> (2023) ⁴²	Agile governance: Rules dynamically updated to match technological evolution; prohibits algorithmic abuse (e.g., price discrimination, addiction induction). ⁴²
Local Industrial Promotion Laws⁴²	Stimulates innovation and economic empowerment through institutional support. ⁴²	Shanghai's <i>AI Industry Development Promotion Regulations</i> (2022): Pioneered "error-tolerance mechanisms"; Shenzhen's <i>AI Industry Promotion Regulations</i> (2023): Established dedicated funding and ethics committees ⁴²	Deregulation focus: Infrastructure co-development (e.g., smart computing clusters), public data sharing, and reduced pre-approval burdens. ⁴²
Rights & Security Safeguards⁴²	Protects national/personal rights by regulating computing carriers (networks), algorithmic fuel (data), and subjects (personal information). ⁴²	<i>Cybersecurity Law</i> (2016), <i>Data Security Law</i> (2021), <i>Personal Information Protection Law</i> (2021) ⁴²	Closed-loop constraints: Covers all technical elements (computing power, algorithms, data); grants individuals algorithmic opt-out and explanation rights. ⁴²
Ethical Governance System⁴²	Translates ethical principles (e.g., "human-centered AI") into enforceable compliance duties embedded in development lifecycles. ⁴²	Art. 4 of <i>Generative AI Service Management Measures</i> (requiring adherence to social ethics); Shenzhen Regulations Art. 21 (mandating corporate ethics committees) ⁴²	Context-adaptive implementation: Prioritizes preventive ethical constraints with "human-in-the-loop" mechanisms (e.g., manual intervention), differing from EU's rigid checklists. ⁴²
Industry Standards Framework⁴²	Bridges technical specifications and legal norms, promoting innovation and global collaboration. ⁴²	<i>National AI Industry Standardization System Guidelines</i> , Shanghai Regulations Art. 66 (empowering ethics committees to draft guidelines) ⁴²	Ecological shift: Integrates carbon footprint tracking and energy efficiency metrics, forming a "standards-laws-policies" tripartite model. ⁴²
Technical Elements Coverage⁴²	Governs AI's three pillars: computing power, algorithms, and data. ⁴²	Computing: <i>Critical Information Infrastructure Security Protection Regulations</i> (2021), "East Data West Computing" project; Algorithms: Ministry-level rules; Data: <i>Cross-Border Data Security Assessment Measures</i> (2022), Zhejiang's public data regulations ⁴²	Comprehensive oversight: Optimizes computing layout via policy incentives; constructs compliant data circulation paths. ⁴²
Japanese Reference Case⁴²	Japan's draft <i>AI Promotion Act</i> mirrors China's "ordered innovation" logic. ⁴²	Emphasizes national strategic planning, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and balanced risk-control innovation. ⁴²	Cross-jurisdictional validation: Confirms "ordered innovation" as a replicable East Asian governance paradigm prioritizing developmental pragmatism over ideological rigidity. ⁴²

This is my typology for this issue. China represents an ordered-innovation model with different laws to address different concerns in the society. The US model for me is a pan-securitization model, which is trying to maintain technological hegemony and address geopolitical challenges. The EU model is a risk-aversion model which transplants its legal ideas in the product security field into AI regulation, as exemplified by its risk level methodology.

We found out that if the United States' model became predominant, there would be nothing left for Global South countries because it would not allow any challenges to its dominance in technology, economy, and so on.

The Chinese model actually opens a space for the Global South. Just a couple of days ago, we discussed about China's open source generative AI such as DeepSeek and a number of other open-source models. According to a statistical report provided by Hugging Face—a very popular news source in the AI area. Among the world's top ten open source LLM models, nine are from China. Open-source AI models are just one of the many ways to show how the system would be open to the whole world. For example, Global South countries such as Brazil, Congo or Malaysia, can develop their own AI applications on the basis of the foundational AI models which are open source and created by Chinese innovators. With this open-source movement, we can foresee that the world in the digital era can move towards a more equitable, dialogical and progressive future. Actually there are many legal details that I do not have enough time to discuss. I just delineate my general theoretical landscape for AI governance.

I would like to talk a little bit about the conclusions to finish my speech. First, China's AI governance model is a viable alternative for Global South countries, challenging the dominant western neoliberal development framework, with the United States dominating in the field as the foundation of the old system. Secondly, China's institutional elasticity characterized by phased legislation, local experimentalism and adaptive sequencing, effectively balances technological innovation with risk control, avoiding the regulatory rigidity of the EU and the security-driven containment of the United States. And finally, this approach offers the Global South a pragmatic, context-sensitive development pathway that prioritizes sovereignty, capability building, and technological self-determination over an imported universal blueprint.

1.6.5 The Application of Artificial Intelligence in Russian Media: Opportunities and Challenges

• Speaker: Kamila Nigmatullina

• Year: 2025

I represent the second largest university in Russia, Saint Petersburg State University. We celebrated our 300th anniversary last year and will celebrate 80 years of journalism education at our school next year. I am also the head of the Department of Digital Media Communications, Doctor of Political Sciences, an expert at the SPbU Center for Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, and the head of the Master's program "Artificial Intelligence in Journalism and Media Communications."

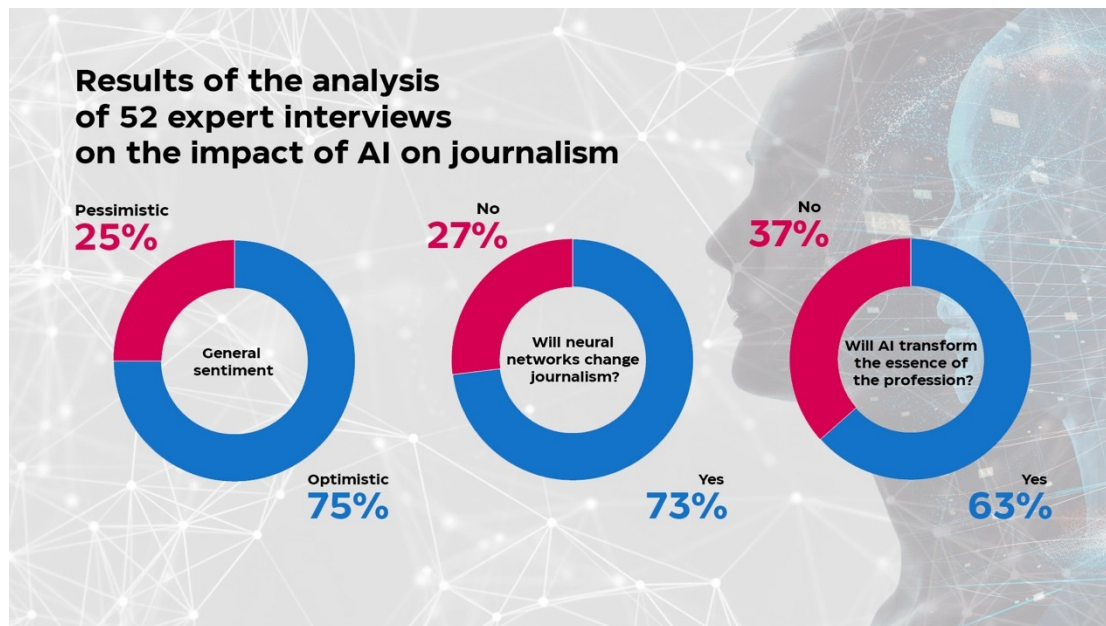
Today, I would like to tell you about our research on the integration of neural networks into newsrooms mainly in Russian regions, as well as how we train professionals in the field of artificial intelligence for the media industry. By artificial intelligence, I mean mainly generative AI and large language models.

In 2023, we launched pilot research projects on the implementation of neural networks using the examples from the southern and northern regions of Russia. We quickly realized that behind descriptions of editorial practices lie much broader social and institutional challenges. This prompted us to raise deeper questions about the place of AI studies within the social and human sciences.

Just to remind you, there are 89 regions in Russia. Why did we focus specifically on the regions? Previous studies have shown that Russia is divided not only into clusters of industrial development, but also in terms of social dissatisfaction reflected in the media space. Therefore, we decided to start directly with regional diversity, rather than focusing on the success stories of national media. Some Russian scholars argue that adopting neural networks is the only way for regional media to survive. The starting point – what we call 'Point A' – is not just the year 2025, but the entire 25-year history of digital transformation in local media in Russia. The results of this transformation include both new opportunities and more complex challenges compared to the era of traditional or classical journalism.

Our theoretical framework also draws on neo-Marxist thought, which views artificial intelligence as a driver of 'digital capitalism,' reshaping production processes, transforming labor markets, and accelerating monopolization in the digital economy. Our first step was to study the general tone of public discourse. As you can see, it turned out to be largely positive. The professional community is divided into two groups: those who see these changes as another round of digital evolution, and those who believe the very essence of journalism is being

transformed. A similar division occurred earlier during the wave of digital transformation, which in academic literature came to be described precisely as ‘transformation,’ not ‘evolution.’ When we speak of such essential changes, we refer to the transformation of journalistic normativity, including ethics, autonomy, and objectivity. The emergence of new professional rules – especially for technical specialists in newsrooms – and the expansion of human responsibility now extends to machines.



The second step was conducting pilot interviews in three regions. They revealed that there are currently no grounds to expect a breakthrough in AI implementation within the next year or the next two years: there are no special regulations in the newsrooms, targeted investments, or large-scale training programs. At this stage, we collected data on the most popular large language models and the tasks they help solve. And as you might guess, they are mainly ChatGPT and GPT-based models. We found that media managers are generally optimistic and highly value the potential benefits of AI adoption. We have accumulated diverse experience in implementing large language models and other kinds of machine learning and deep learning in newsrooms. In national newsrooms, AI is mostly used as predictive analysis for calculating trends in audience engagement, and this is more interesting for newsrooms than generating images or texts. The main challenges they mention include the need for factchecking, compliance with ethical standards, and the inability (especially in state-owned media) to use foreign AI services for moral or political reasons, but they still use them.

The second phase of the pilot study was conducted in Saint Petersburg and the Leningrad Region in the North, and Rostov-on-Don and Krasnodar Krai in the South, and several other regions. This pilot study shows that there is no single pattern of AI adoption, but there are recurring elements. For instance, in some newsrooms, change started from below. When an ordinary employee began using large language models and then demonstrated the results to his manager. This was the case in Delovoy Peterburg, for example, a daily newspaper where a marketing specialist set up a chatbot to handle phone calls for marketing purposes. In other cases, change is initiated from above: for example, at Don-24 TV channel, a digital director became the AI pioneer, while at the Sakhapechat media holding in the Yakutia region, implementation began with large-scale training for all staff. I was invited as a trainer and visited Yakutia in January. Although we have not asked respondents directly about tensions between management and creative staff, the challenge is clear.

Another shared feature amongst regional outlets is the absence of a dedicated AI specialist, the lack of official guidelines from journalists' unions or university departments, and little preference for job applicants with AI skills. All this indicates that, whilst there are no preconditions yet for large-scale systemic effects in 2025–2026, awareness and literacy are steadily growing. I travel a lot across the country, and what I observe is very telling: there is no one pattern in Russia for AI use in newsrooms. Every newsroom tries to 'invent a bicycle,' reinventing the wheel rather than learning from others. The experience throughout the country is very diverse and, frankly, quite chaotic at the regional level.

An important pressure factor on the media system is the everyday use of AI by general audiences, which develops faster than its professional adoption within media organizations – two quite different things. This may lead to a gap between audience expectations and newsroom capacities. Another pressure factor is the growing competition between national and foreign large language models. Now there are two of them in Russia leading the market: YandexGPT, which is a Russian AI, and GigaChat (belonging to Sber). At the moment, American products still dominate, but Chinese models such as DeepSeek and Qwen are quickly catching up. An increasing number of journalists report bias in foreign LLMs and the framing of answers due to training on English-language Internet data. In Russia, several initiatives are now working on sovereign national LLMs.

Thus, returning to systemic effects for the media industry, we can outline the expected trends by 2027 at both national and regional levels:

Widening gap between newsrooms that have adopted AI and those still struggling with social media; by 'struggling,' I mean that not every newsroom in Russia is ready to work on social media.

Widening gap in media literacy and audience awareness.

Growing divide between AI-literate journalists and conservative media managers, and vice versa.

Widening income gap between those who have optimized production and SMM as well through AI and those who still rely on manual labor, including differences in salaries between specialists and managers.

It is important to emphasize: we are not talking about another decline or threat, but rather about the need for a renaissance and the use of emerging opportunities for a breakthrough, especially in the regions. At this moment, we can share our nationwide experience, though not the regional experience, because as I mentioned, it's very chaotic. I think sharing this experience, not reinventing bicycles but forming patterns and algorithms to make AI implementation effective, is a very interesting perspective for collaboration with all countries through the Global South.

It is appropriate here to say a few words about a Master's programs which I run: 'Artificial Intelligence in Journalism and Media Communications,' launched at SpbU in 2024 in partnership with Yandex company. The programs focuses on training media professionals with AI competencies.

Our experience shows that it is impossible to develop autonomously without industrial partners. Practical work must be integrated into the academic environment. The main challenge for universities is that technology evolves faster than the market and much faster than academia can systematize and convert it into teaching materials. As a result, such programs rely more on heuristics than deduction, and graduates' competencies tend to anticipate possibilities rather than simply reproduce known results. Learning is project-based, with industry experts participating in assessment. We also have students from China enrolled in this program.

The goal of the Master's program is not merely to train AI specialists for media, but to prepare managers capable of implementing innovation in media production with measurable results. In practice, AI implementation today usually involves three parties: a newsroom hires an IT specialist, consults philologists or linguists, and integrates the technology under the supervision of a commercial director. One case occurred at a regional TV station in Yekaterinburg (in the middle of Russia, or in the

Urals), where the newsroom developed its own AI-based content management system. An employee from that newsroom is now studying in our Master's programs, but I should notice and underline that this software inside contains OpenAI solutions.

An important internal partnership for the program is cooperation with the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Data Science of Saint Petersburg State University. Our students' complete internships there and participate in scientific events focused on industrial AI and the Internet of Things. At least four times a year, we invite media managers to share their experiences in AI-driven automation of media production.

Speakers in 2025 highlighted two key challenges: the issue of public trust in media, and the issue of professional trust within the media community itself. For example, journalists are becoming less trusting of PR professionals, and vice versa.

At a recent event in October, we discussed the use of large language models and AI agents in education, and our students presented three chatbot projects designed to assist students for different purposes. For instance, one helps Chinese students navigate information about Saint Petersburg State University.

However, I should note and underline that I was speaking about large language models where we as a country compete with foreign models, predominantly America; we also compete with Chinese models. However, if we speak about industrial and military purposes, Russia is independent. We do have our own digital solutions for that.

Thank you very much.

1.6.6 From a Multipolar World to a Multicentric World: A New Paradigm for the Communications Economy

• Speaker: Alexander Gurdus

• Year: 2024

When contemplating the current problems and challenges of the world economy, a fairy tale comes to mind. In this tale, a cruel monster governed a country, causing immense suffering to its inhabitants. Heroes would periodically emerge, attempting to fight the monster, only to disappear. Ultimately, some heroes would defeat the monster, but upon their victory, they miraculously transformed into monsters themselves, perpetuating the cycle of suffering. This fairy tale serves as a cautionary reminder: when considering changes to the world economic system, we must not merely seek to replace one dominating party with another, as this approach does not lead to positive outcomes for humanity. Inspired by this understanding, we have sought a possible solution within the scientific, engineering, and technological domains, focusing on the concept of a unified digital space for economic interaction, combined with the idea of sovereignty.

The internet and digitalization have already rendered the space of economic interaction extraterritorial, enabling the implementation of an "economy of communications." This facilitates direct interaction between any objects, aiming to achieve global interoperability with minimal transaction costs within this unified space of economic interaction. From our perspective, a multipolar world represents an intermediate stage, as it is inherently unstable and unsustainable. We advocate for the ultimate goal of creating a polycentric world, where extraterritoriality does not contradict the sovereignty of cultures, religions, languages, social traditions of countries, and human communities. On the contrary, jointly developed open international standards should ensure respect for socio-cultural sovereignty, complementing direct extraterritorial economic cooperation within this unified digital space.

To understand the current global situation, it is important to briefly examine who benefits from the prevailing economic landscape, particularly the dominance of the United States. Figures illustrate how this dominance is realized: within the past five years, the capitalization of the top 100 companies has shown consistent growth, reaching approximately \$42.6 trillion. In the structure of these top 100 companies, the U.S. holds approximately 77% of the combined market capitalization, while Europe accounts for roughly 8%, and China contributes about 6-7%. Concurrently, the capitalization of the American so-called Magnificent Seven (a group of high-performing and influential companies in the U.S. stock market, including Alphabet,

Amazon, Apple, Broadcom, Meta Platforms, Microsoft, and NVIDIA) reached almost \$16 trillion as of May 2025. This demonstrates that the United States and its leading companies substantially exceed others, and this gap has widened in recent years. Furthermore, by the end of 2023, the banking sector emerged as the leading profit sector among all sectors of the world economy, holding about one-fourth of the total global profit. The energy and industry sectors, combined, received approximately the same profit as the banking sector alone.

Today's global economy is fundamentally based on attempts to maintain unilateral dominance through technology. The primary pillars of this economy are the current financial system, built around the leading commission center of the reserve currency, and supported by international institutions funded by it. Dominant influence in the digital space is exerted through the simultaneous ownership and management of technology and content. The income and profit of the financial and banking sector are essentially derived from the transaction costs imposed on other sectors of the real economy, which are based on resources and production.

We propose a shift in perspective: instead of merely attempting to change our position within the current economic model, we should focus on developing and gradually transitioning to a new economic model. We term this the "economy of communications," an economy of direct interaction between any objects, implementing global interoperability with minimal transaction costs within a unified digital space. In this new paradigm, the financial system would not be a dominant leader but rather one of the end-to-end technologies within the unified digital space of economic interaction.

This unified digital space of economic interaction can be formed on the basis of the Internet of Digital Twins (an ontological network of digital twins of physical or informational objects), serving as an environment for the existence and interaction of digital objects. Its rules and unity are defined by open standards and protocols. This represents a new global service: the commercial, industrial, and financial internet. The transition from the "Internet of Pages" (the World Wide Web) to the Internet of Digital Twins, which are uniquely semantically defined and ontologically connected, would allow for the seamless integration of objects belonging to one economic entity into the business processes of other entities.

In the current world of information technology, individuals, companies, and states lack true subjectivity. They can be disconnected from banking services, social networks, and trading platforms for real or perceived violations of established digital platform rules. In contrast, within the unified digital space of economic interaction, the subjectivity of participants would be inherent. Their ability to

perform economic activities, and their access to personal data and current accounts, could not be blocked by third parties. The participant in the unified digital space of economic interaction would be the owner and integrator of their own personal information.

Regarding technological solutions, we propose developing and implementing a new technological stack of distributed control operating systems and development tools. This would significantly simplify the development of complex integrated systems and enable the realization of a space for information, objects, and intelligent agents. It is important to note that the accumulated technological debt currently prevents adequate solutions for information security and the establishment of a trusted environment in the digital space. However, these problems remain unsolved because the concept of technology-based dominance relies on solutions created more than 40 years ago. The proposed approach aims to resolve the growing challenges of information security and complexity.

We also propose implementing a new financial system as one of the end-to-end technologies of the Unified Digital Space (UDS). This system would be based on an admission processing center, which is a geographically distributed network of neutral data centers. The proposed technology is designed to prevent any single party from dominating the financial area, and the geographical expansion of neutral data centers would only increase the system's reliability for all participants.

Part II: Development Theories of the Global South

2.1 Theory and Practice of Overcoming Western Constraints

2.1.1 The Global South: From the Third World Project to the New Mood

• Speaker: Vijay Prashad

• Year: 2024

An interesting development recently took place at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting, held in Peru just before the G20 meeting in Brazil. At the APEC summit, two significant announcements were made, the nature of which illuminates the current global situation. Two heads of government met with the Peruvian president: Joe Biden, the outgoing President of the United States, and Xi Jinping, the President of China.

President Biden held a press conference with the Peruvian president, where he announced that the United States was providing Peru with 150 locomotives and passenger cars for Lima's metro system, which is in need of expansion. However, Mr. Biden did not mention that these were not new passenger cars or locomotives. In fact, these vehicles had been previously used and subsequently discarded by the California Train Authority (Caltrans) before being shipped to Peru as a gift. In essence, Mr. Biden presented Peru with used locomotives and passenger cars.

In stark contrast, at a separate meeting in Lima, President Xi Jinping and the Peruvian president virtually inaugurated the Chancay port, located several kilometers north of Lima. This deepwater port, costing 3.6 billion USD to build, features 18 berths. Notably, its construction did not involve used machinery; sophisticated equipment was required to excavate an 18-berth deepwater port. The striking difference between the United States' gift of used equipment and China's collaboration with Peru to build a major deepwater port for commercial traffic between Peru, China, and other parts of the world is significant, revealing much about the contemporary global landscape.

What was less remarked upon was that just a few years prior, the Chinese government had been negotiating a similar deal with El Salvador. A long-term objective of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been to establish a port on the Pacific coastline not controlled by the United States, unlike the existing major deepwater ports of Seattle, Los Angeles, and Panama. When China expressed interest in building such a port in El Salvador through the BRI, the Salvadoran government was highly receptive. However, upon leaving the meeting in Beijing, the

then-President of El Salvador was asked by the United States to travel via Tokyo. In Tokyo, Premier Shinzo Abe conveyed a message on behalf of the United States government: El Salvador could not build a port with China, as it posed a national security risk. The pertinent question, however, was whose national security this port truly threatened. Ultimately, the port in El Salvador was not built approximately seven years ago. In contrast, the Chancay port in Peru has now been completed. This demonstrates a shift in historical trajectory, where countries in the Global South have come to understand that only a few nations are willing to provide the scale of infrastructure and investment necessary to foster South-South integration.

It is crucial to consider this narrative within a broader context. This is not merely a philanthropic gesture from China to Peru; the Chinese economy will also benefit from this port. Eventually, a train line is projected to run from Peru deep into the Brazilian Amazonian province to the free trade zone of Manaus. It is anticipated that industrial products from Manaus will then be able to travel directly to Peru and cross the Pacific, bypassing the need to be transported to Sao Paulo and around the Cape of Good Hope in Africa. Some estimates suggest this route will be significantly faster even for Brazilian products destined for Singapore and China.

A key question for the intellectuals and governments of the South is what products will be exported from the Global South to China. The Chinese proposals through the Belt and Road Initiative are clear and distinct from the pledges made by the United States. For instance, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) grant to Nepal was hardly a development initiative; it was a deal designed to channel Nepali energy to India, not genuinely develop Nepali industry. While the choices are evident, the critical question is how the opportunities presented in this period will be leveraged by the Global South. Reliance solely on the Belt and Road Initiative is insufficient for achieving comprehensive development.

The fundamental question is the Global South's own development agenda. Do Southern countries possess a coherent development plan? Will they forever export raw materials—whether to the United States, Europe, or now China—and merely import finished products from elsewhere? If the structure of the world economy remains unchanged, then this form of "development" will resemble the old patterns. Therefore, the structure of the international economy itself must be transformed. In this endeavor, the countries of the Global South bear the responsibility to formulate a development plan and agenda that best capitalizes on the current situation.

Recently, the governments of China and various African nations, through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), have been discussing industrialization on the

African continent. This discussion is particularly significant. If industrialization is to occur, will it be limited to the processing of raw materials in countries like Peru? Part of the agenda suggests that instead of shipping frozen avocados from Peru to China, they should be partly processed in Peru before shipment, ensuring some value-added remains within Peru. The persistent question remains: what form will this industrialization take? Will it solely involve raw material processing, or will finished products be manufactured within these nations? This is a critical challenge that demands careful consideration. Will the Global South merely process raw materials, or will it establish a comprehensive commodity and value chain within its regions before exporting goods?

A second critical issue arises when industrializing or scaling up productive forces: the source of capital for such expansion. Will capital be borrowed at commercial rates, thereby trapping nations in another cycle of debt dependency? Or will it be secured at concessionary rates, or through joint ventures where Southern countries provide land and raw materials, while partners like China, India, or Vietnam provide capital for industrialization? These are serious issues that cannot be avoided. It is impossible to discuss "development" without a frank discussion about the level of raw material processing into finished products, or how the entire process of industrialization will be financed.

It is evident that China's development and modernization were achieved not primarily through raw material exports, but largely through the immense development of technology and the qualitative improvement of productive forces. This involved the careful importation of technology from Europe, Japan, and other countries, its meticulous harnessing, and subsequent enhancement to qualitatively boost productive forces. Will the Global South develop a development agenda that includes the technical improvement of productive forces, ensuring that it is not apprehensive about productivity improvements? In many Southern countries, populations are vast, and unemployment is a grave concern, leading to a fear of labor substitution by capital. There is even a tendency to believe it is better to exploit labor and hire more workers than to qualitatively improve productive forces. This mindset must be overcome. The qualitative improvement of productive forces must be central to any development agenda.

This panel was framed by three words: sovereignty, independence, and development. My focus has been on development, primarily because I believe that in the long term, no country can truly be sovereign or independent if it does not genuinely develop itself and provide a dignified life for its people.

2.1.2 Multiple Challenges Facing the Global South and the Construction of a New Order

• Speaker: Narayan Kaji Shrestha Prakash

• Year: 2024

It is my distinct privilege to stand before you today at the Global South Academic Forum 2024, a gathering that brings together some of the brightest minds and visionary leaders from around the world. I express my deepest gratitude to all those who have made this event possible. We have gathered here today at an extraordinary moment in history. The world is undergoing a profound transformation, and at the center of this change is the Global South. No longer are these nations merely trying to catch up. They are redefining progress, challenging outdated models of development, and crafting their own path forward.

The Global South is not just a geographical term; it represents a philosophy of inclusivity, equity, and solidarity. It is a collective vision defined by shared struggles, resilience, and the pursuit of justice. This vision posits that all nations, regardless of their size or historical circumstances, deserve equal value and respect. The philosophy of the Global South calls for addressing historical injustices, overcoming structural inequalities, and fostering cooperation rather than division. From the Bandung Conference in 1955 to the Non-Aligned Movement and today's efforts for a more equitable global order, this shared vision has guided the Global South's fight for sovereignty, independence, and sustainable growth.

The path forward is not without challenges. Today, the Global South faces numerous complex issues that demand collective action. The resurgence of Cold War era mentalities, escalating geopolitical tensions, and the weaponization of economic and technological dependencies are all obstacles that we must overcome. Powerful nations continue to impose systems that perpetuate poverty and inequality. At the same time, the climate crisis threatens the very existence of many nations in the Global South. While the world has entered the digital age, this new era has brought its own set of challenges. The concentration of power in the hands of a few dominant platforms limits the representation of Southern perspectives. In light of these challenges, it is clear that the Global South must unite to advocate for an inclusive global framework that promotes social, economic, and environmental justice for all.

This is a call for a new international economic order, one that corrects the systemic inequities perpetuated by institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which have historically favored the interests of the Global North. These institutions have mostly reflected

the interests of developed nations, leading to policies and practices that have disadvantaged developing countries in the Global South. Developing countries frequently have limited influence in global financial institutions due to disproportionate voting rights and governance structures that favor wealthier nations. Therefore, a new order that aims to rectify these systemic inequities by ensuring that financial rules and regulations are more inclusive is of utmost importance. The Global South calls for an economic order that prioritizes development over profit and equity over exploitation. Strengthening South-South cooperation through initiatives like shared trade agreements, regional development banks, and collaborative institutional efforts will create a new order that is beneficial for everyone. By leveraging local resources and knowledge, the Global South can reduce dependency on external powers and create self-sustaining economies.

Financial assistance from traditional global institutions has often come with stringent conditions that deeply favor the Global North and the pursuit of neoliberal philosophy, rarely aligning with recipient countries' development priorities. A new financial system that reduces this dependency and allows countries to pursue economic and development policies more suited to their unique contexts is therefore important. This must be a major hallmark of Global South cooperation.

The New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), which emerged in the 1970s, continues to be highly relevant today, especially for the Global South. The original goals of the NWICO, to promote equitable access to media and communication technologies, remain critical in ensuring that diverse voices are heard and represented. The Global South must advocate for a media landscape where information flows reflect a wide range of cultural, political, and social perspectives, instead of being dominated by a few powerful Western-controlled platforms. This is essential to achieve a more inclusive global information order that amplifies the voices and narratives of the South. Despite the advent of digital platforms, the Global North still holds significant control over the digital space, reinforcing media dominance and regional digital inequality. Algorithms often prioritize content from wealthier nations, further marginalizing Global South perspectives and exacerbating the digital divide. Additionally, many developing countries continue to struggle with insufficient infrastructure to fully participate in the digital economy. The Global South also faces diminished representation in global media, often being reduced to stereotypes, which has led to growing concerns about information sovereignty.

As we chart a course for the future, we must not overlook the importance of climate justice. Despite contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions, the Global South

suffers the most from the effects of climate change. The Global North, which has historically benefited from industrialization at the expense of the environment, must take responsibility for reducing emissions and supporting adaptation and mitigation efforts. This includes providing technology transfers, financial support for green initiatives, and addressing the loss and damage experienced by vulnerable communities. The Global South must lead the way in adopting green technologies, renewable energy, and sustainable agriculture practices. Our vision for modernization must be one that creates resilient economies while preserving our environment for future generations.

The Global South has suffered greatly from external exploitation, colonialism, and conflicts fueled by external interests. Our path forward must prioritize cooperation, dialogue, and conflict resolution. We must reject the politics of division and war, and instead advocate for peaceful solutions through diplomacy and cooperation. Furthermore, cultural exchange, education, and social equity must be promoted as central pillars of development. We must focus on human capital, investing in education, healthcare, and social protections. Social equity must be foundational for development efforts, ensuring that marginalized communities, especially women, minorities, and the poor, are empowered and included in the process.

Philosophy plays a fundamental role in guiding how societies approach modernization, especially in the Global South, where a one-size-fits-all development model often neglects indigenous cultures and values. Rather than blindly following Western-centric models, the path to modernization should be holistic, blending economic growth with social equity and environmental sustainability. This approach emphasizes three key principles: first, cultural sovereignty, which involves honoring the unique traditions, values, and aspirations of the nations; second, holistic progress, which seeks a balance between economic development, social well-being, and environmental care; and third, shared humanity, which underscores that modernization should not solely focus on technological advancement, but also on creating societies based on dignity, justice, and equality. In this way, philosophy helps ensure that modernization is both inclusive and respectful of diverse cultural contexts, while also fostering sustainable and human progress.

The path towards shared modernization must not simply replicate the industrialized North's model. Instead, it should be a reimagined development paradigm that aligns with the unique needs, aspirations, and cultural identities of the South. These new models should balance global opportunities with the protection of distinct local values, ensuring that development is both inclusive and sustainable.

At the heart of this modernization is economic development. The Global South has long been a victim of neoliberal policies and unchecked capitalism, which have exacerbated inequality and undermined indigenous traditions. The new development paradigm must address these issues, focusing on local needs while integrating into the global economy. Priorities should include investments in technology, manufacturing, agro-processing, and value-added industries, which will create jobs, enhance exports, and stabilize economies across the region. Sustainability must also be a key priority. Many countries in the Global South, including Nepal, have already felt the effects of the unsustainable growth driven by the existing global order. There needs to be a collaborative effort across the Global South to share innovations and accelerate the adoption of green technologies and renewable energy. This approach will not only drive modernization but also address the urgent challenges of climate change and environmental degradation.

Regional cooperation is vital for the collective growth of the Global South. By strengthening regional trade, building infrastructure, and promoting political stability, nations can reduce their dependence on external markets and enhance economic resilience. Creating regional value chains and common markets will foster intra-regional trade, creating a more unified and robust economic bloc. The Global South's greatest strength lies in its collective voice. Historically, platforms like the Non-Aligned Movement have played a critical role in advocating for more equitable global policies. However, more must be done to ensure the South's representation in key decision-making bodies like the UN Security Council, the WTO, and the IMF. By working together, these nations can push for reforms that make global institutions more representative and accountable.

The Global South must continue to advocate for an alternative to the dominant neoliberal development paradigm. Originating from the Bandung Conference in 1955, South-South cooperation promoted a vision of emancipatory, state-led development. This new approach must emphasize economic, political, cultural, and technical cooperation among Global South countries. South-South cooperation represents a long-term project aimed at liberating nations from the vestiges of colonialism, poverty, and underdevelopment. The Global South must seek to transform the global order by promoting mutual benefit and solidarity among disadvantaged nations, while challenging the imperialist domination of the North.

The Global South must establish a new standard for the creation of new technologies and innovation. Advancements in fields such as artificial intelligence, genetics, data science, space exploration, and new material science are deeply shaping human civilization and must be collectively pursued. These advancements also come with new sets of challenges and ethical dilemmas. We must develop a

collective vision and collaborative platform to align on these advancements and new challenges.

As we move forward, let us be clear: the Global South does not seek to dominate, but to inspire. We do not aim to exclude, but to include. Our vision is of a shared future—a world where all nations have a voice, where all people have opportunities, and where humanity thrives together. To achieve this, we must act collectively and decisively. Let us invest in our people, empowering them with education and skills. Let us innovate together, leveraging technology for the common good. And let us lead with courage, standing firm against forces that seek to divide us. Modernization in the Global South is not the end of a journey; it is the beginning of a new chapter for humanity. It is a chapter where fairness, justice, and peace are not ideals, but realities. Together, we can build this future today. Together, we can redefine modernization for the world. Together, we can create a civilization that truly embodies the best of humanity.

2.1.3 The Political Economy of the Global South

- Speaker: Juliane Furno

- Year: 2025

I would like to talk a little about elements of political economy in the Global South, trying to prioritize what I identify as challenges, but also the possibilities of the emergence of a new global order. To begin with, I will bring up some elements that help to characterize the multipolar order that is approaching, or in which we are taking our first steps.

An important characterizing element concerns the fact that, for the first time, the change the world is experiencing in the global order is not being preceded by any major world war. Historically, major systemic reconfigurations have been preceded or catalyzed by prolonged wars. I cite the Napoleonic Wars reconfiguring the process preceding the Concert of Europe; World War I am shifting hegemony from England to the United States; or the Cold War itself repositioning the United States in a role of unipolar governance with the absence of rivalries in the interstate system.

On the one hand, it is important that the reconfiguration of a new order is not preceded by a major war, as this saves lives; but, on the other hand, this poses the challenge of a more prolonged process of erosion. In other words, the speed of these transformations will depend on several variables and will likely extend much further over time.

The multipolarity that is emerging in the 21st century has several specific features, especially when compared to the period of multipolarity at the end of the 19th century. A key element is that the emerging powers today are underdeveloped countries, developing countries, and countries in the Global South. This is a reconfiguration in which the emerging powers are underdeveloped, with the political and geographical characteristics that surround the concept of the Global South and underdevelopment. In addition, the global reorganization is multicultural, multi-ethnic, and geographically located both outside Europe and outside the West.

Although this order is emerging, some people have coined the expression that "the new has not yet been born and the old has not yet died," characterizing a period of interregnum. Regardless of whether the phrase is attributed to Gramsci or Lenin, what matters is the idea that we are living in a moment of interregnum between the dismantling of the old order and the formation of a multipolar order. This process will not be subject only to the free forces of the market or development itself, as the

United States plays a role that hinders or hinders any more autonomous and cooperative movement in the Global South.

The importance of the Global South is evident: if we take the BRICS countries, we represent around 40% of GDP (calculated by purchasing power parity). However, although we are emerging and important countries in this new global order, this importance is not yet proportionally reflected in the international monetary and financial system, which poses challenges in the sense that the dollar is still the dominant currency, accounting for 88% of foreign exchange transactions, while only 15% involve BRICS currencies. Questions about the hegemony and dominance of the dollar are longstanding, but have become more prevalent in the 21st century, mainly due to the impact of the financial crisis, the war in Ukraine, sanctions against Russia, and the possibility that the United States could use the dollar as a political weapon.

To characterize the current moment, I draw two parallels here. In the 20th century, there was a period when the United States' power and currency were, if not threatened, at least questioned or contested. This American power was challenged in several areas:

Economic and Technological: With the intensification of inter-imperialist rivalries following the rise of large Japanese and German companies, especially in the 1950s.

Military: With the defeat of the United States in the Vietnam War.

Political and Geopolitical: A series of questions or tensions; with the imminence of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the result of popular mobilizations in 1977, building a non-aligned or anti-imperialist foreign policy; the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union and greater extensions in the Asian region; and the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua in 1979, creating tensions, conflicts, and difficulties for US imperialism.

Monetary: As Paulo Nogueira Batista Jr. has already mentioned, with the end of the gold standard, the appreciation of the dollar, and the end of the Bretton Woods system, in addition to questions about the dollar, especially from France, regarding the existence of link between dollar transactions and the gold standard in central banks.

Technological Supremacy: With the significant acceleration of Soviet efforts in the arms race, which already sought to make up for the Soviet Union's relative lag behind the United States in the defense industry, this raises questions. The United States responded to this challenge in several ways: in the military-technological field

with "Star Wars" and the attempt to thwart any Soviet rearmament attempts; with the expansion of military bases, especially in Southeast Asia; and with the defense of the dollar supported by the Plaza and Louvre agreements. With the increase in interest rates on US public debt securities in 1979, there was a drain on global savings and a framework that the United States operates on its competitors. This enabled US public debt to become a mechanism for sustaining high and persistent trade deficits, serving as an instrument for the forced capture of international liquidity.

We can suggest that the United States, once again, as in the 1970s, is being threatened or challenged in the monetary, financial, and military fields. I would highlight the following points:

There is an offensive or blockade in the military field, visible in the results of the war in Ukraine and NATO's difficulty in spreading to countries of the former Soviet Union.

China occupies a different role from the Japanese and German economic competition of the past, representing simultaneously a political, economic, and technological rivalry.

There are alternatives being considered in the field of de-dollarization, with better and more pluralistic designs for diversifying the currency basket, including the BRICS as an attempt at cooperation among countries in the Global South.

Sanctions operate a paradoxical mechanism: while creating constraints and difficulties for peripheral countries and the Global South, they also give rise to alternatives outside the dollar.

To conclude, I would like to point out some ongoing movements that may accelerate the process of change. First, there is a change in the role of some countries in the world economy, especially China, Russia, and Brazil. Second, growing geopolitical tensions between global powers are giving rise to scenarios of greater multipolarity, which is of interest to countries, especially those on the periphery of the Global South.

In addition, there is mistrust of the dollar generated by the Trump administration and, finally, a political willingness among a wider range of countries to reduce their dependence on the dollar. Examples of this include the internationalization of the RMB, settlement agreements in local currencies, and central banks buying euros for geopolitical hedging, giving rise to various alternatives in the field of de-dollarization.

2.1.4 What Constitutes Good Modernization: The Universal Significance of Chinese Modernization

• Speaker: Su Changhe

• Year: 2024

Thank you to the forum organizers for the invitation. It is a great honor to participate in this Global South Academic Forum. Regarding the proposition raised by Mr. Vijay, whether it is feasible for Global South countries to achieve development and modernization—I believe the answer is affirmative. Currently, numerous Southern countries, including China, are exploring modernization paths suited to their own characteristics. This practice itself serves as powerful evidence of such feasibility.

Chinese-style modernization, as repeatedly emphasized by President Xi Jinping, possesses five core characteristics: modernization in a country with a super-large population; the coordinated development of material and spiritual civilization; the implementation of the concept of harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature; the advancement of the goal of common prosperity for all people; and the adherence to the path of peaceful development. These characteristics constitute the essential attributes of socialism with Chinese characteristics while also embodying universal values in modernization efforts.

Colleagues from Southern countries here may ponder: Does the modernization experience rooted in China's national conditions hold lessons for others? I believe that when we examine "Chinese-style modernization" within a broader theoretical framework of modernization, its five characteristics essentially align with the universal standards of a high-quality modernization path. High-quality modernization must meet at least four fundamental requirements: First, the development model must be locally adaptive, grounded in specific national conditions to formulate implementation pathways. Second, development goals must be comprehensive, encompassing coordinated progress across economic, social, cultural, and ecological dimensions. Third, development outcomes must be inclusive, ensuring that the fruits of modernization are shared by all people. Finally, the development process must be sustainable, advancing socioeconomic progress while safeguarding the enduring development of human civilization.

Has the modernization path achieved its self-defined developmental goals? Measuring the modernization trajectories of the East and West against this criterion reveals that both models have achieved remarkable developmental accomplishments, yet their theoretical interpretations at the political-economic

level exhibit fundamental differences. Western political-economic theories, when explaining their modernization path, tend to emphasize free market principles, privatization reforms, and representative government systems, viewing these institutional elements as the foundation for material civilization development. China's political economy framework, however, focuses on demonstrating the synergistic effects of the socialist system, an active government, and an efficient market. It highlights the institutional advantages of the national mobilization system, emphasizes the dynamic balance between individual vitality and collective norms, values the historical continuity of traditional Chinese civilization, and upholds an independent foreign policy system. These two theoretical systems exhibit significant differences in value orientations, institutional designs, and interpretive frameworks, reflecting the diverse characteristics of modernization paths shaped by different civilizational contexts.

The second crucial criterion for modernization is that its achievements must be shared by a broader population. Examined through this lens, the Western path to modernization reveals significant limitations: persistent widening of domestic wealth gaps, and imitative nations experiencing social distribution imbalances—achieving economic growth without establishing inclusive development mechanisms. These shortcomings manifest not only in domestic governance but profoundly impact the global landscape—Western modernization theory has failed to resolve social polarization, instead exacerbating structural contradictions within the international system and reinforcing the "center-periphery" power structure inherent in global capitalism. Particularly noteworthy is how this model has trapped nations in the Global South in prolonged developmental stagnation, hindering their ability to break free from the constraints of the existing international economic order.

The theoretical essence of the Chinese modernization path emphasizes the essential attributes of socialism and a people-centered development philosophy, with its core purpose being to propel a vast population toward common prosperity. This development paradigm constructs a more inclusive modernization pathway through institutional innovation, overcoming the inherent flaws of traditional modernization theories while offering new practical solutions to global development imbalances.

The third core tenet of modernization standards is that development must not rely on aggression, colonization, or the plunder of other nations to achieve its own modernization. Examining global modernization practices reveals the historical limitations of traditional Western models—they sustained their own modernization by establishing colonial systems and encroaching on other nations' development space. This zero-sum development logic not only eroded the common foundation for

international development but also posed a systemic threat to world peace. In stark contrast, Chinese modernization pioneers a new paradigm of peaceful development. Through an institutionalized policy framework, it has forged an endogenous, sustainable development path entirely free from the historical shackles of colonial expansion.

These two development models have spawned fundamentally distinct theoretical frameworks. The core theoretical framework of Western political economy, centered on linear evolutionary theory, implicitly justifies the historical legitimacy of colonial expansion. In contrast, China's philosophy of peaceful development constructs a new knowledge paradigm emphasizing mutual learning among civilizations and win-win cooperation. Both exhibit essential differences in value orientations and practical approaches, reflecting diverse interpretations of modernization's essence across civilizations.

The ultimate criterion for evaluating modernization pathways lies in their capacity to achieve self-development while simultaneously fostering cooperative, win-win frameworks with other nations to advance shared progress. A truly superior modernization model must transcend the limitations of "self-improvement alone" and commit to establishing a virtuous cycle of "benefiting all under heaven." Historical experience demonstrates that traditional modernization paths rarely achieve this goal, often resulting in the predicament of developmental imbalance.

China's modernization practice is actively striving to overcome these historical limitations. Through substantive initiatives such as jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative, deepening economic cooperation, and advancing mutual benefit and win-win outcomes, China is actively exploring paths for coordinated development with countries in the Global South. This value orientation—seeking both domestic progress and driving the advancement of other nations—objectively demands breaking free from the frameworks of existing dual knowledge systems and constructing a new social science paradigm that meets the needs of shared development.

2.2 The Crisis of U.S. Dollar Hegemony and the Monetary Emancipation of the Global South

2.2.1 Dollar Hegemony and De-dollarization: Reconstructing the International Monetary System Against the Backdrop of the Rise of Global South Nations

• Speaker: Ding Yifan

• Year: 2024

Many of your remarks have pointed out the glaring injustices within the current international monetary system. Such unfairness not only hinders the normal development of many countries but also exacerbates economic volatility and instability to a certain extent.

As Professor Lu Di said earlier, either excessive or insufficient inflows of U.S. dollars into China inflict shocks on the Chinese economy. The representative from Venezuela also shared how U.S. sanctions severely disrupt the country's resource exports and economic operation. The sanctions also make Nigeria suffer greatly. This is the same case for Russia, with its economy bearing immense damage from dollar sanctions and restrictions on the payment system. It is evident that unfair treatment within the existing international payment system constitutes a substantial constraint on the development of Global South countries.

That's why it is urgent for Global South countries to explore new breakthroughs, seeking fairer and more reasonable alternative mechanisms within the international payment and settlement system to reduce their risks and uncertainties of being preyed upon. Western countries and media often stress a "rules-based international order", yet we are aware that the rules are mostly crafted by them – the foundation itself is unfair. Demanding that all nations obey rules built upon unjust foundations amounts to institutionalizing and perpetuating a form of neo-colonialism.

Therefore, we must break free from the Western-imposed framework ideologically, challenging and rejecting international rules that lack equality and inclusivity. When Western countries insist on binding us with these rules, we should forcefully assert that we are not involved in their formulation and that they can be arbitrarily modified by the rule-makers. We firmly refuse such an unequal arrangement.

Global South countries should unite and collaborate to advance a fair, just and inclusive new international monetary and payment system, freeing future development from the shackles of unjust institutions. This is more than an economic issue; it concerns the justice and sustainability of global governance. Thank you all!

2.2.2 Seigniorage and China's Monetary System Dilemma: The Paradox of a Manufacturing Giant and a Monetary Minority

• Speaker: Lu Di

• Year: 2024

China's Reform and Opening-up highly coincides with the wave of globalization. When China deeply integrates into the global market, it inevitably receives significant impacts from globalization which features increasing financialization and speculation. Amid this process, China's position in the international monetary system profoundly affects its own development.

The concept of "seigniorage" should be emphasized here. Traditionally, it is a financial term referring to the revenue a state gains from issuing currency. However, in specific contexts, it concerns not only fiscal income, but also monetary and financial stability, as well as the choice of economic development path.

From the global perspective, the era of globalization has seen prolonged economic stagnation and divergence. Apart from China, most Global South countries are experiencing growth significantly lower than pre-globalization levels and below that of developed countries. Such divergence comes from the decline of global productive investment. In contrast, China stands out from other developing countries in this regard, and this is closely related to its financial environment.

Since the launch of reform and opening-up policy, China's credit supply has expanded in tandem with the country's economic scale. The ratio of broad currency to GDP has risen steadily while not triggering severe inflation. This advantageous monetary sovereignty has underpinned economic transformation amid persistent fiscal deficits, enabling China to maintain a production-oriented growth model during its transition from command economy to mixed economy. Consequently, China has sustained high-speed growth over many years while keeping inflation under control.

However, the challenge of external dependence on the U.S. dollar persists. On one hand, China has become the world's largest productive, trading and industrial economy, with manufacturing added value overtaking that of major European and American nations. In 2012, the value even neared the combined total of the G7 countries. On the other hand, the Chinese RMB's share in international reserves and trade settlements remains low, insufficient to effectively underpin China's foreign economic and trade activities. The dependence on the U.S. dollar incurs multiple costs, including financial seigniorage and additional risks when dollar hegemony is leveraged for national interests or weaponized.

For instance, from 2015 to 2016, China experienced severe capital flight, with the most conservative estimates reaching 600 billion USD. The capital outflows not only fueled asset bubbles and financial risks, but also dragged manufacturing enterprises into financial speculation, exacerbating the secondary financialization. This has been a key factor behind the stagnation of productive investment – private investment in particular – and the gradual economic slowdown over the past decade. China's annual real GDP per capita growth averaged over 8% from 1978 to 2012 but dropped to around 5% subsequently with increasing difficulties to maintain this pace.

This situation has constrained the autonomy of monetary policy, amplified dependence on the U.S. dollar and vulnerability to external shocks and exacerbated the global long-term suppression of productive investment. As China deeply integrates into the world market, this has become an issue that must be confronted.

Therefore, the question for China and the Global South is not whether to de-dollarize, but how to confront the high risks and costs stemming from dollar hegemony and its weaponization. This is an inescapable reality demanding urgent solutions for a fairer, safer and more autonomous international monetary system.

2.2.3 Deglobalization and Monetary Multipolarity: A Theoretical Framework for Redistributing the Excessive Privileges of the Democratized Dollar

• Speaker: Ndong Samba Sylla

• Year : 2024

The challenge to dollar hegemony posed by challengers represented by the BRICS nations does not necessarily signal the end of global monetary supremacy. Only when new alternatives can "democratize" the "excessive privileges" enjoyed by the dollar will they truly benefit the Global South.

Historically, systemic challenges to the dollar regime did not originate with BRICS nations. The initial opposition emerged from the West, particularly led by France. At the inception of the Bretton Woods system—when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank were established—France emerged as one of the most influential nations within the framework. Despite its war-ravaged economy, France insisted on securing the third-highest quota ranking in the IMF, trailing only the United States and the United Kingdom while surpassing China. France even threatened to withdraw from the system if its demands were not met. Ultimately, the United States acceded to this request.

Unlike other nations, France did not pay its IMF share in national currency or gold but instead issued non-interest-bearing treasury bonds. In 1947, France became the first country to secure a loan from the World Bank and draw upon IMF resources. From 1946 to the present, the IMF has had 12 managing directors, five of whom were French, collectively serving for 44 years.

Ironically, France, a primary beneficiary of the Bretton Woods system—never ceased criticizing and undermining the dollar's dominance. The dollar's status as the global reserve currency allowed the United States to purchase foreign goods and services on credit. It also enabled unrestricted dollar issuance to acquire European companies or fund military operations. Then-French President Charles de Gaulle detested the dollar's "excessive privilege," adopting the famous phrase coined by his Finance and Economy Minister Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. To weaken the dollar's dominance, de Gaulle demanded the Federal Reserve systematically convert its dollar surpluses into monetary gold. This radical move was one of several factors leading to the dollar's decoupling from gold in the early 1970s.

To secure economic autonomy within the dollar-dominated system, postwar France also imposed a monetary regime on many of its former African colonies, granting itself an "excessive privilege" akin to America's global status. On one hand, France could purchase goods and services from its African client states without holding

dollars. On the other, it exercised complete control over these nations' dollar revenues, deploying them at will. Unfortunately, while the French franc was replaced by the euro in 1999, this monetary imperialism persisted. As of 2024, 14 sub-Saharan African nations—representing over 200 million people—still use the CFA franc. Created during the colonial era in 1945, this currency remains managed by the French Ministry of Finance.

This history reveals that challenging U.S. monetary hegemony need not conflict with maintaining the challenger's own monetary sovereignty. This nuance is often overlooked in current debates about de-dollarization. The term itself lacks precision. Typically, it refers to developing bilateral and multilateral payment initiatives to diminish the dollar's role in international trade settlements. This trend is real and accelerating. In 2020, global trade totaled approximately \$46 trillion, with nearly half of all transactions conducted outside the dollar system. However, even as more nations opt for non-dollar currencies in trade settlements, the dollar's status as the global reserve currency will remain unchanged in the near term.

The current challenge to the hegemony of the dollar (and to a lesser extent, the euro) stems largely from unilateral financial sanctions imposed by the United States and the Eurozone on countries like Russia, Iran, and Venezuela. When banks from these nations are excluded from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system, their dollar, euro, and even gold reserves risk confiscation. Faced with such sanctions, a growing number of countries recognize the need to develop alternative payment systems, reduce dollar and euro reserves, and seek safer avenues for storing their foreign exchange surpluses. These motivations are reflected in a study drafted by on behalf of the Russian government for the BRICS nations. The report criticizes the current international payment system for being exploited by the West due to a lack of competition and advocates for an international monetary and financial system based on the principles of security, independence, inclusivity, and sustainability.

These BRICS proposals partly reflect the demands of nations accumulating substantial foreign exchange surpluses. However, the fundamental issue with the current international monetary and financial system lies less in dollar hegemony than in the reliance on a handful of currencies as reserve assets, forcing most nations to accumulate these assets for external payments. In essence, the current international monetary system could be termed a "fiat paper standard. "This concept reflects how a handful of currencies serve as international units of account, means of payment, and stores of value. Countries issuing these currencies enjoy immense advantages: their balance of payments deficits can be self-financed, as they purchase imports in their own currency with limited impact on exchange rate

stability. Conversely, nations whose currencies lack reserve asset status typically must accumulate substantial foreign exchange reserves to conduct external payments and stabilize exchange rates. For instance, the U.S. trade deficit with China implies that China accumulates dollar deposits, which are typically invested in U.S. Treasury bonds. This asymmetry stems from the international monetary system's inability to facilitate free payment conversion between different currency-issuing nations.

This fiat currency standard imposes a permanent transfer problem on countries in the Global South. Their ability to service external debt in local currency is constrained by their access to strong foreign currencies. In contrast, for countries issuing key currencies, external payments are indistinguishable from domestic payments. Countries in the Global South must accumulate dollars or other key currencies to make external payments, which is the primary source of their foreign currency borrowing and subsequent debt crises. The fiat currency standard fundamentally locks these peripheral nations into a pattern of monetary and financial dependency. However, not all countries face the same challenges. Countries with persistent current account deficits often need to borrow from abroad and may fall into debt crises. Conversely, nations that consistently accumulate large foreign exchange surpluses do not need to borrow to obtain the required dollars, as their export revenues typically exceed payments. While surplus countries theoretically possess greater maneuverability than deficit nations, they also face a form of financial dependency by accumulating key currency deposits that often yield low returns and risk confiscation by the issuing country.

These factors indicate that even increasing the quantity of the global reserve currency cannot fundamentally resolve the issue that the vast majority of countries are compelled to accumulate foreign exchange reserves. A fair, development- and climate-friendly international monetary and financial system should eliminate the obligation for countries to accumulate foreign exchange reserves and enable every nation to pay for imports in its own currency. This objective is what we advocate as the "democratization of the dollar's excessive privilege." The optimal path to realizing this vision is establishing an International Clearing Union mechanism, long championed by Keynesian economists. As Jan Kregel describes, its core function lies in: "abolishing the status of national currencies as reserve assets and creating sustainable incentives for international balance of payments adjustment through a global liquidity management framework."

Under this institutional framework, technical reforms such as expanding Special Drawing Rights quotas or adjusting allocations would become unnecessary. Monetary decentralization or multiploidization can only yield lasting and beneficial

impacts for the Global South when it effectively "democratizes" the excessive privilege of the dollar.

2.2.4 Geopolitical Fragmentation and the International Monetary Landscape

- Speaker: Paulo Nogueira Batista

- Year: 2025

I will speak briefly on the topic of the Non-Aligned Movement in the current geopolitical conditions, starting from what seem to be four possible scenarios in geopolitical terms, and the role that the Non-Aligned Movement can play in these different contexts.

Starting from an unlikely scenario, but that cannot be ruled out entirely: the US and its allies manage to recover hegemony. We know that they're in decline. This decline may even accelerate, may have even accelerated already. But is it possible that they might recover their standing? It's not impossible, it has actually happened before. If you look at the history of the United States in the 20th century, and go back to the 1960s, 1970s, Vietnam War, inflation, crisis of the dollar system established in Bretton Woods etc., you will see that, after 10 years of struggle, the US managed to recover under Ronald Reagan. Now, Donald Trump, in my opinion, is not a second coming of Ronald Reagan. The US situation is much more difficult now than it was in the 1970s or 1980s. So, we won't see, I believe, a recovery of the old style, Western dominance that we had until early this century.

The second possible scenario would be something that Donald Trump recently referred to when he visited South Korea, and met President Xi Jinping: the offer of a G2 arrangement in which the US and China would share global power. The United States would supposedly adjust to the fact that China is uncontrollable and establish peaceful relations. That would be the G2 - a highly problematic scenario for us Global South countries. We would have to face the fact that the two major powers would be united to a large extent. For the Non-Aligned Movement this would be a major challenge. But I submit that this G2 scenario is also unlikely. Why? Basically, because we have to thank the United States for being extremely inflexible. I hope we can also thank China for not falling into such a trap. I don't think China will. You know why? Because China, as everyone else, knows that the US cannot be trusted. It is prone to make commitments and go back on them very easily. So, we would not expect China to simply believe the US and go for a G2 solution, sacrificing the ties that it has developed with the BRICS and the rest of the Global South.

A third scenario is something even worse, from our perspective, which is what we could call the G3, an arrangement between Russia, China, and the United States; a superpower arrangement that would try to divide a large part of the world into spheres of influence. This would be of course a major defeat for the Global South

project and for the BRICS project. It would perhaps benefit the three countries in terms of power politics. But again, what saves us from this terrible scenario? The intransigence of the West. The West is very convinced of its superiority and of its right to rule. The US is unlikely to agree to actually share power with Russia and with China. Look at China from this perspective. I believe - my Chinese colleagues here present can correct if I'm wrong - that China has difficulty in establishing a hegemony in its region; it is strongly contested by many countries in its neighborhood. It has difficult relations with India, with Japan, with Vietnam, and with the Philippines. So, China would be a little bit foolish to accept such a division of the world because it would not benefit from the theoretical possibility of establishing a sphere of influence in its region. Unless the US were to accept Taiwan being back in China, fully. That's too hard a pill for the United States to swallow. What about Russia? Russian friends may disagree, but I think Russia might not think this is a bad thing to have its sphere of influence recognized, for example, including Ukraine. Perhaps the US would agree, but the Europeans have shown again and again that they are not willing to go down this route. So G3 is probably also impossible.

A fourth scenario is the one that I think will prevail. It is the multipolar world. Messy, with multiple centers of influence. A multicurrency, for example, would prevail. Perhaps in this context, a group or sub-group of Global South countries, can work towards a new monetary system, a new reserve currency. This may be too tall an order for us. But anyway, a multipolar is the most likely outcome of the decline of the West. That's what's looking probable in the current world conditions. So, we would have the North Atlantic pole, United States, Canada, Europe; we would have the South Asian pole with India; the East Asian pole very influenced by China; Russia's Eurasia; Brazil, if it gets its act together may constitute have its own center of influence in South America and so forth. In this conception, what is envisaged are centers of influence; not spheres of domination as traditionally thought. Brazil, for example, could not come to its neighbors and say, let's build something which I would lead. By the way, I think large countries of the world, including large Global South countries, should never use the word "leadership". You don't appoint yourself leader of anything; you have to be recognized as such, if at all, right? Sometimes we fall into the trap of behaving like Americans do, calling themselves the leaders of the world every time.

To conclude these comments, a few words on BRICS and BRICS+. As I said, the BRICS would become irrelevant and meaningless in the G2 or G3 scenarios. It would be very relevant in a continuation or re-establishment of American hegemony and very relevant in the multipolar world. Now, what about BRICS expansion? At this point, BRICS has only ten countries and the Global South has around 140. Can the BRICS

become more inclusive? We are now ten countries that are full members of the group and ten partner countries. There's a dilemma there for the BRICS, because a large group gains visibility but loses effectiveness. The dilemma, in other words, is the choice between efficiency and inclusiveness. I would prefer, quite frankly, that the BRICS stop expanding without excluding co-operation with other countries of the Global South. We have mechanisms for that. We created a New Development Bank, the NDB, headquartered here in Shanghai. I believe all of you have heard of it. It's a Global South bank, at least in conception. If you go to the building of the bank, you will be impressed. A beautiful building built by Shanghai municipality for us, 30 floors, marvelous structure. The bank has nearly 300 employees. Dozens of projects have been approved in infrastructure and sustainable development. The bank possesses a capital base of more than USD 10 billion paid in by countries that are members. We have issued bonds, including in non-dollar currencies.

Nevertheless, the NDB falls short of what we planned, when I came to Shanghai exactly 10 years ago, as part of the administration of the new bank. It's not a global bank yet. Far from it. As mentioned, the bank has only ten member countries. It needs to expand its membership if it is going to be something relevant in the global scenario. One other serious problem I will mention is that NDB is firmly tied to Western capital markets, tied to Wall Street, tied to London, tied to credit rating agencies of the United States. This has led us to the absurd situation where the NDB has stopped lending to a founding member – Russia. The bank has stopped disbursing even on pre-existing contracts, signed before the war in Ukraine, which is a violation of legally perfect contracts, and this because fear of sanctions from the West. In retrospect, I think we made a mistake back then, underestimating the severity and the duration of the geopolitical split. When we founded the bank, we did not foresee that it would need to be much more independent of the Western capital markets than it now is. The other problem is that we are not very sure of the quality of projects. From the outside, we cannot check if the projects are really efficient, because there's no transparency in the bank. And lack of transparency is yet another problem. If you go to the website of the bank, you don't find much information.

That's what I wanted to say to you. I think the Global South has a major role to play, now more than ever. I will quote what I heard at a dinner in Beijing from one former Chinese official. He said the world is changing so fast, the West has so many difficulties that the time has come for people from the Global South to speak up, make their voices heard, in order that the world can be changed for the better.

2.2.5 Reforming the World Financial System: Technological Paradigm Shift and Historical Opportunities for BRICS Nations

• Speaker: Violetta Arkhipova

• Year: 2024

As the basic methodology for this research, I have utilized two Russian theories: the theory of technological and world economic modes shifts, and the Noo-sphere theory by Dr. Gubanov, which provides prospects for the future of the world monetary and financial system. It is not useful to analyze the financial system as a distinct object; we need to see the whole picture of history to understand its construction. Dr. Glazyev has built such a picture, and his theory shows that we are now in a very dangerous period of shifting modes: from the fifth technological mode to the sixth, and from the old world economic mode to the new integral one. There is also a shift in the countries leading capital accumulation cycles, with the Asian cycle emerging as the new one. This indicates several problems in the current financial system, which was constructed by the core countries according to their interests. The present-day world monetary and financial system was constructed by the USA, leading to distinct issues such as de-dollarization, the weaponization of currency, and financialization, which causes a range of bubbles and financial and economic crises.

The conclusion from this theory is that we are in a period of very severe changes, and developing countries have started to become the engine of reforms. The Noo-sphere theory gives us a sense of the future, connected with Marx's ideas of the development of production. It suggests that production will become increasingly knowledge-intensive, necessitating reforms of the financial system in line with social development. These positive reforms will align with the interests of developing countries. The concept of global noo-transition shows how the world financial system can be reoriented towards goals of social development, with the main factors being a new type of integration and the sharing of values as a precondition for these reforms.

In the case of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), several stages of this noo-integration are very similar to the group's development, and we can judge it as a noo-integral group. Within this group, there is an initiative to build a common monetary and financial area, which can be the start of reforms for the global monetary and financial system.

Regarding the case of Russia, we are trying to understand why sanctions were imposed on a country so different from those previously sanctioned, in terms of territory, number of trading partners, and integration into world markets. We concluded that this severe period was due to the effects of the reforms of the 1990s, and the sanctions were an external shock intended to be turned into an internal one to disturb the Russian economy. Although there were several announcements that the Russian economy was absolutely destroyed by sanctions, subsequent research has shown a medium-sized effect. It is sometimes hard to get an exact view of the sanctions' impact. In the early sanction period, Dr. Glazyev and I took some indicators and, through correlation analysis, found only a slight sanction effect during that time, which has a reducing dynamic. For instance, our estimations of the exchange rate captured the most active sanction effect in 2015, at about 10% to 15%, with a much slighter effect of less than 4% in 2014 and 2016. There has been no major problem in employment. We see the sanctions as a stimulus for our economy towards reindustrialization. In that case, de-integration and the transformation of the world financial system are very significant for us, and Russia is among the supporters of this integration.

My colleague mentioned the report of a Russian team that proposed key principles, such as using digital mechanisms to transform the world monetary system. In line with our proposals of noo-integration and building a common monetary and financial area, this can be rather workable. To conclude, this is the biggest opportunity for developing countries and for BRICS countries to create a new world and a new world order, and to reconstruct the world financial system according to their understanding and principles. The main thing is that we need to first believe in the workability of this initiative, in this new kind of integration and cooperation, and then start working on definite mechanisms. This includes improving the New Development Bank so as not to rely on the IMF (International Monetary Fund). I would like to remind you of the wonderful fairy tale, The Wizard of Oz, where the heroes traveled the road paved with yellow bricks to realize their dreams. I really believe that our golden BRICS will follow us to a better future.

2.2.6 BRICS Currency Reserve and Payment System: Operational Mechanisms and Implementation Pathways for a Supra-Sovereign Currency

- Speaker: Gong Gang

- Year: 2024

When discussing the relationship between and prospects of the BRICS currency reserves and payment system, it is crucial to recognize that the Kazan Summit did not explicitly propose plans to issue a BRICS currency in its declaration, though Putin presented a 100-unit BRICS currency mockup at the meeting and garnered wide attention. Instead of issuance, the summit more frequently emphasized establishing a BRICS payment system, and authorized central banks and finance ministers of BRICS nations to advance research on currency cooperation and payment system operations, with a report due at the next summit. This arrangement represents progress over the previous summit, where discussions were led by specialized working panels, rather than direct engagement by finance ministers and central bank governors.

As early as 2013, I proposed the concept of BRICS currency in my essays, discussing its core frameworks including transaction rules, issuance mechanisms, exchange rate setting and system expansion. These ideas were submitted to the State Council for reference. In recent years, this vision has received increasing attention, including Medvedev's call for creating a new global currency and research done by the New Development Bank. There are also emphasized principles such as avoiding replication of the euro model, preserving sovereign currency differences and refraining from gold pegging. These concepts align closely with my statements over a decade ago.

This vision arises against the dollar hegemony. As the world's primary reserve currency, the U.S. dollar lacks internationally recognized balance mechanisms in its issuance and usage. The Federal Reserve, whose equity is held by private banks, operates monetary policies independently from the U.S. government. This means the U.S. dollar is not fully a sovereign currency to some extent. The structural imbalance stemming from dollar hegemony manifests as the following. The U.S. sustains long-term trade deficits by leveraging the dollar's global position, while issuing dollars at an exchange rate above their actual value. During times of financial crisis, it employs monetary tools to resolve domestic issues and acquires high-quality assets from other nations. It even directly targets economies like Venezuela, Iran, Afghanistan, North Korea, Cuba and Russia through sanctions.

In this context, developing countries must unite to introduce a supranational currency – namely the tentatively termed “BRICS currency” – to establish a new international monetary system. Its core mechanisms should be: all intra-system trade settlements would be conducted exclusively in the BRICS currency, with no direct bilateral exchange between sovereign currencies; member states would retain independent monetary and fiscal policies; exchange rates, issuance and expansion rules would be jointly determined by member states. To realize this system, an independent payment platform separate from SWIFT must be established to incorporate all cross-border payments into an autonomous system. This is not only a prerequisite for smooth operation of the BRICS currency, but also a safeguard for financial security.

The launch of the BRICS currency will inevitably challenge the fundamental interests of the dollar system, potentially prompting strong countermeasures from the U.S. However, this system does not need to encompass all BRICS nations from the outset. It can be introduced with the agreement of just two countries and gradually expanded to attract more member states. As membership grows and its influence increases, even the U.S. may be compelled to engage in negotiations. A new international monetary order will be advanced.

It is worth noting that, though the internationalization of Chinese RMB can serve as one pathway toward de-dollarization, this method cannot change the inequities in the international monetary system if it is solely advanced within the existing mechanism. Therefore, building a fair, just and inclusive BRICS currency system is not only about economic interests, but also has the potential to lay the foundation for realizing a community with a shared future for mankind.

2.3 The Developmental Logic and the Path to Autonomy of the Global South

2.3.1 Capital, State, and Development: A New Discourse for the Global South

• Speaker: Eric li

• Year: 2023

Good morning, everyone. Thank you! Today's conference theme is communication. Regarding communication in the Global South, I'm sure many will discuss methods and techniques. Why don't our stories reach the world? On communication, what I wish to share today is: what content should we communicate? Perhaps we lack platforms or media outlets. These are certainly challenges. But perhaps we lack substance. If our content lacks substance, even the most sophisticated communication techniques will yield limited results.

What I wish to propose today is this: we are living in an era—perhaps the first major turning point since the Industrial Revolution over 200 years ago—where previous discourses and theories have lost their relevance and power. Even in mature, developed liberal nations, these frameworks have grown feeble, leaving them in a state of crisis.

For us in the Global South, this may present an opportunity: Can we create new ideas and concepts tailored to our own developmental context and trajectory? Can we chart a clear path for the world—including developed nations—and lead this new discourse? This, of course, involves a multitude of complexities. Today, there is an abundance of discourse on human rights, humanitarianism, and the relationship between humanity and nature. Western liberalism possesses a comprehensive discourse and theoretical framework that is entirely self-consistent. We are only just beginning, with many aspects yet to be explored.

Today, I've shared insights from my own reflections and professional experience. I work in venture capital. What I wish to discuss now is the relationship between capital, the state, and development. We all recognize that the Global South, including China, now faces a significant predicament: after decades—two or three decades—of development, we've encountered a crisis, a problem with development itself. Where exactly does this problem lie?

I recall Marco mentioning earlier that when I interviewed President Lula last year, I posed a question to him. I said that after the Cold War ended and globalization began, we were all filled with hope. It seemed that as long as we integrated into this globalization, developing countries could quickly become developed nations. We

thought we'd have everything America and Europe had. But 20 years passed, then 30 years passed. Why is it that even the so-called BRICS nations still haven't achieved ideal development? Why is that? Many are even in serious trouble—not just underperforming but facing crises like internal strife and war. Lula gave me an answer that surprised me. He asked, "Then why does China seem to be developing quite well? China appears to be the only one thriving. Why is that?" He replied, "Because you underwent a revolution. Your development was built upon the foundation of that revolution. Of course, you have the Communist Party of China, and the revolution was led by the Communist Party. We did not have that revolution, so we are still struggling within the pre-revolutionary structures."

During President Lula's recent visit to Shanghai, I met some members of his team. A seasoned Brazilian gentleman remarked to me: "The biggest difference between China and Brazil is that you endured a hundred years of humiliation. You suffered a century of shame, then had a revolution, and then achieved national rejuvenation. We endured 400 years of humiliation, and we still haven't had a revolution, so we're stuck in our current state."

Today, I want to explore how we can develop new discourses within this evolving landscape—discourses that address both Western challenges and our own. For nations of the Global South, including developed ones, our greatest developmental challenge lies in understanding capital, understanding the state, and navigating the dynamic between capital and state. In truth, throughout the globalization process since the Cold War, nations of the Global South—including China—have to some extent become trapped within the discursive framework shaped by Western developed, liberal nations over the past two centuries: a narrative of the ebb and flow between capital and the state. Yet this framework may no longer suit us or align with current developmental trajectories. Naturally, after the Cold War, nearly all nations of the Global South embraced neoliberalism, market economies, and small government. All these policies have now proven to cause immense harm and yield poor results.

Today, as an economist and venture capitalist, our collective bible is undoubtedly Schumpeter. We grew up reading those famous quotes—Chairman Schumpeter's sayings, What do Chairman Schumpeter's sayings tell us? When I pursued my MBA, the entire theoretical framework was built upon his work. He authored two seminal texts we studied from the start: *The Theory of Economic Development*, which emphasizes the pivotal role of entrepreneurship and innovation in economic growth. You see, I believe everyone is quite familiar with this theory, right? Entrepreneurs drive new products, new production methods, and new markets by taking on risk and uncertainty. All of this then organizes into innovation,

continuously propelling economic development. He also introduced the concepts of the innovation cycle and creative destruction. All these ideas have shaped our industry, including China's reform and opening-up over the past three to four decades. Many who advanced that process did so within this theoretical and conceptual framework.

But Schumpeter also wrote a book titled *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. He predicted that while this innovative capitalism could create immense value and achieve tremendous success, it would ultimately lead to its own destruction through monopolization. So how could this destruction be averted? Schumpeter argued through democracy. The democracy he referred to, of course, was liberal democracy—the direct democracy later promoted in Europe. He believed this transformation could resolve the contradictions arising from the process of creative destruction.

Within this theoretical framework, reflecting on the past two centuries—beginning with the 19th century, the dawn of modernity, and the Industrial Revolution—we can analyze Western history as a two-century tug-of-war between capital and the state. This ongoing struggle, marked by alternating dominance and conflict, represents a fundamental dualistic tension throughout this period.

The first era naturally began with the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. Before that, the concept of capital didn't exist; it emerged during that period. Capital was born in the 19th century, perhaps spanning the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, the entire century of the 19th century should be regarded as an era of capital's unrestrained growth and disorderly expansion. We are all familiar with that history. As I mentioned earlier, in this tug-of-war, ideologically and politically, there were ruling parties and opposition parties. The same dynamic applied to theoretical ideologies. The ruling party of that era was the "theoretical ruling party" of the first wave of unrestrained capital expansion and the industrial revolution's unbridled growth. This, of course, refers to the theorists we now recognize as driving the first phase of capitalism's development—Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, and Mises—who emphasized the freedom of the market economy. So-called utilitarianism, the establishment of private property, and the free market economy—all these systems and rule of law provided a superior, unrestrained environment for capital's development.

Of course, there were also "opposition theories" during that era—theories that began to emerge in the 19th century to critique the prevailing conditions. The most prominent among them were Marx and Engels. Yet they were the opposition party within the theoretical sphere, emphasizing class struggle and public ownership. Engels argued that capitalism led to unfair wealth distribution. All these points were

articulated by them at the time. Yet they remained in the minority. They were the opposition. Throughout the entire 19th century and into the early 20th century, capital transcended all else. How did it achieve this? By comprehensively legitimizing, justifying, and scientifically rationalizing private interests.

In the past, private desires were not considered legitimate or lawful; they were to be controlled, regardless of civilization or culture. China has many ethical principles, and the West has various Christian ethics to restrain and control one's private desires—it wasn't a matter of doing whatever one pleased. But in that era, private desires were completely legitimized, exemplified by Bentham's "principle of the greatest happiness. "The economics we know today emerged from that era. Economics wasn't a discipline back then. The word "economics" originates from the Greek "οἰκονομία" – "οἶκος" meaning "household," and "νόμος" meaning the rules governing it: managing oil, salt, soy sauce, vinegar, and cooking methods.

Adam Smith's writings are particularly fascinating. Edinburgh back then was perhaps one-tenth the size of our Jing'an District, maybe even smaller—roughly one-third the size of our Hunan Street. It was minuscule. His entire economic theory described what families on the hillside were doing, what the shops, bars, and pubs down below were engaged in— —and the small court. That was the extent of it. Not even half the size of Hunan Street. Yet back then, they expanded this economics infinitely, turning it into a discipline capable of regulating all of humanity according to its laws. And scientific, right? There's another science I haven't mentioned here—Sigmund Freud. He took private desires, documented his patients' cases, and turned it all into something scientific, declaring that private desires themselves are legitimate, lawful, and scientific.

This path, traveled for over a century, collapsed into immense catastrophe: two world wars. The root cause was unequal distribution of spoils between East and West. Capitalism itself plunged into crisis: political corruption, the Great Depression, social unrest. This history is well-known to us all. Thus, in this tug-of-war between capital and the state, capital suddenly collapsed.

The subsequent half-century, I call the State's Counteroffensive. Political will reasserted itself, declaring this unsustainable. America had two Roosevelts: the first fought monopolies, while the second established welfare programs to curb capital's unchecked expansion, forging a new equilibrium. This tug-of-war lasted half a century—from the Great Depression in the early 20th century through the post-WWII rise of welfare capitalism. Welfare capitalism flourished most powerfully in Europe, but America pursued it too, right? They established Social Security, built the interstate highway system, and implemented numerous other initiatives. What

China has done in recent decades—building highways, establishing labor unions—has fueled economic growth and spawned a massive middle class. We often call the 20th century the American Century. But the entire 20th century wasn't American; only its latter half truly belonged to the U.S. America endured immense hardship in the first half of the century—utter chaos, perhaps comparable to China's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. They faced food shortages, fought two world wars, and were mired in the Great Depression for over a decade. They only emerged from it thanks to Hitler dragging them into action—without WWII, they might never have escaped the Depression. It was an incredibly difficult period. The American Century truly began after WWII. The post-war era marked the start of this era, with the first few decades characterized by welfare capitalism. It was a time when the will of the social state and political forces restrained capitalism—through unions and various other mechanisms, right?

During that era, developing nations and Southern countries were also participating. That's why I say Southern nations have always been part of this discourse system. The counteroffensive by the state began to shift as welfare capitalism emerged in the West, giving rise to the middle class we just mentioned. Then, the Soviet Union and China surged ahead with formidable momentum, prompting questions about the legitimacy of private interests and restricting their legal scope. The state and society returned to the political stage. To varying degrees—the West, China, and the Soviet Union were entirely different. The theoretical ruling parties and opposition parties changed. The governing theories worldwide transformed. Marxism became a major governing theory, dominating half the world. Mao Zedong Thought emerged as a massive governing theory. Europe had Gaullism, and as Schumpeter himself described, " " or national capitalism, right? These all reflected the state's will gradually asserting itself to curb capital.

Simultaneously, new opposition theories emerged. Hayek, for instance, began critiquing these governing ideologies in the same era. Milton Friedman, our mentor. Gary Becker—all these thinkers argued that the existing approach was unsustainable, advocating a return to 19th-century principles of self-interest, individualism, capital, and markets. Both governing and critical theories, as well as the dynamics between them, underwent transformation. But what unfolded as this trajectory continued into the late 20th century? States began to decline, one after another. How did this decline unfold? The Soviet Union moved from rigidity to disintegration. China also faced problems. We went from pursuing catch-up development to the Cultural Revolution, which also imploded. Meanwhile, Western welfare capitalism faced its own economic crises.

Another round came at the turn of the last century—the counterattack of capital. You see, they came at us, and they fought back. How did they fight back? Through what's called neoliberalism. In the 80s and 90s, two conservative politicians—Reagan and Thatcher—pushed it forward. This book (*A Brief History of Neoliberalism*) even places us within the neoliberal camp. The economy boomed, innovation surged. These decades saw the rise from Silicon Valley to Wall Street to globalization. On the theoretical front, the ruling and opposition parties switched places. Hayek, Friedman, Gary Becker—they became the ruling party's theorists. Everyone, from the US and Europe to China, was studying their ideas. Our market reforms also drew heavily from their theoretical frameworks and governing doctrines. Simultaneously, a new opposition theory emerged. Let me reiterate. It's like that American movie *Groundhog Day*: a man wakes up every morning to relive the same day over and over. This time, theoretical criticism emerged from figures like Piketty and Prebisch. This pair argued that the status quo was unsustainable—the wealth gap was too vast, capital expansion was unchecked, and we needed to rein it in, lest the people revolt. Observe: critical theory and opposition theory resurfaced. This includes Stiglitz. America also saw the emergence of politicians like Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC). Neoliberalism is now collapsing—we all know this. Political corruption, social division, and warfare have given rise to a new left, which may soon drive another wave of national counterattack.

Throughout this entire process, within Schumpeter's framework, I overlooked one aspect that we rarely discuss today: over the past century, we've witnessed immense non-Schumpeterian innovation—truly monumental. The most significant example, of course, is the Soviet Union. Last year, I visited the China Academy of Art, where they held a Vkhutemas exhibition. Vkhutemas was a Bauhaus-style design school—a comparative institution. We all know about the Bauhaus. But when I saw the Vkhutemas exhibition, I was utterly astonished. Vkhutemas was a design institute established under Lenin's directive. At that time, it operated in parallel with the Bauhaus, with many professors like Paul Klee teaching at both institutions — , for instance, taught at both the Bauhaus and Vkhutemas. If you visit that exhibition, you'll be utterly astonished. Back in the 1920s, the Soviet Union—just years after the October Revolution—was utterly destitute. We read Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, knowing Russia's state then: poverty, ignorance, bloodletting for colds and fevers. Yet overnight, that Soviet Russia underwent monumental revolution and innovation. Society leaped forward. Visit the Hujietimas exhibition, and you'll see things we use daily—from the tracksuits we wear to astronaut suits and urban planning. People's Square—many of you foreign friends haven't been to our Urban Planning Center. It's Shanghai's pride and joy. Every city has one now, but Shanghai was the first, the largest, and the most impressive. Compare that to urban planning

over a century ago—ours pales in comparison. Soviet urban planning back then was the real deal. The imagination was boundless. This century, the Soviet century, was an anomaly in Thomas Kuhn's terms—a massive case study.

Now in the Global South, I see new discourses emerging. So-called developmentalism. These are the scholars I've found: Marini, Pereira. But I'm concerned that our discourse is still circling back to the same old liberal framework—this tug-of-war between capital and the state that's dominated discourse for over 200 years. This discourse has lost its vitality; it can't solve the problems ahead. This cyclical pattern has run its course.

In this context, I'd like to spark discussion by sharing China's explorations. China is pursuing an exploration. This exploration is what we refer to as "not taking the old path, not taking the wrong path," as stated at the 18th National Congress. The "old path" means going against economic laws. Even if your intentions are good, if the outcomes are poor and you can't achieve development, everything else is meaningless. China has an old saying: "Laggards get beaten." This is inevitable. The "wrong path" refers to the corrupt transactions we've been engaging in daily for decades. As someone in venture capital, I know we're constantly making corrupt deals. Our entire industry is making corrupt deals. The entire market economy is making corrupt deals. We've sold our souls for development, forgetting our original aspirations. That's the point, right? What good is development if you've lost your soul?

Last May, during Shanghai's lockdown, there was an issue of Seeking Truth. For our foreign friends who may not know, Seeking Truth is the official journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, published biweekly. Typically, we read Qiushi to receive the Party's directives—to learn what is right, what is wrong, how to speak, and what the situation is. This particular issue was highly unusual. In General Secretary Xi Jinping's first signed article, he didn't tell us what was right or wrong. Instead, he posed a question—something rarely seen. He posed a question that I believe would call the "question of the century." He asked how we should understand capital and how we should treat it—all that we've just discussed: capital, personal desires, entrepreneurial innovation. How should we approach these things? Because, he said, Marx and Engels did not face these issues of capital. The socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics is a path that the Party has led the people to explore and create. It is also because of the past—if we had a revolution—that we gained the ability to explore this path on the foundation of that revolution.

So how should we approach capital? The entire world is watching this exploration. We haven't arrived at an answer yet. Even the General Secretary hasn't arrived at an answer, so this exploration is a question—not a solution. I recall that several months ago, when President Putin met with the General Secretary, he remarked that we all feel a bit envious about how China managed to succeed, though we can't quite pinpoint why. We've put forward some ideas and concepts, such as the Five New Development Concepts. I find these Five New Development Concepts quite intriguing: Innovation, openness, green development, shared prosperity, with coordination in between. Innovation and openness—within the framework I mentioned earlier—represent capital, private interests, the market economy, and efficiency, right? Green development and shared prosperity embody socialism and common prosperity. Each of these four elements inherently holds value. Only one is a verb: "coordination." Hahaha. Coordination is a verb; it has no inherent value. It's quite interesting—a true exploration.

In the 21st century, humanity faces immense challenges—including potential catastrophe. Our ecosystems confront existential crises, while markets and technologies grapple with their own crises. What I wish to emphasize today is that none of the theories or discourses born from the 200-year tug-of-war between capital and the state can resolve these crises. Therefore, China's exploration—our era's mission—is to apply a dialectical concept: how to synthesize the "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis" of capital and the state, how to transcend them? This, I believe, is an opportunity for the Global South, including China. This is our chance. Can we forge new ideas—comprehensive new ideas, new concepts, new discourses—to propel the entire world, including developed nations mired in crisis? A new intellectual framework: this, I believe, is what our discourse must explore and advance. Thank you all.

2.3.2 The Political Economy of Market Creation: Industrialization Paths and Income Traps

• Speaker: Wen Yi

• Year: 2024

The previous speaker delivered an excellent presentation, and I'd like to continue the topic discussed by Luo Siyi. I'll now switch to Chinese and follow Luo Siyi's lecture while adding a few additional points.

We observe that while income traps exist globally, certain African nations have seen their per capita GDP stagnate relative to the United States over the past seven to ten years. Their per capita income has remained virtually unchanged compared to developed nations, even declining in some cases. This exemplifies the classic low-income trap phenomenon. The upward trajectory is not seen in African nations but rather in several Asian countries. As Russia mentioned earlier, the red line represents China, while the yellow and blue lines indicate India and Vietnam. I'll return to why this pattern emerged shortly. Essentially, numerous African nations have long contributed vast resources and other assets to industrialization efforts—first for Europe and later for other post-war nations—yet their own income levels have stagnated for extended periods. Now consider Latin American nations. Rich in resources and having gained independence over 200 years ago, many remain trapped in an income trap. Yet their income levels compared to the United States? They are higher than those of the African nations mentioned earlier. When comparing African nations to the U.S., their per capita income is below 5%, some at just 1%, and others even a fraction of a percent. Now, these Latin American countries have per capita incomes higher than the United States—roughly 20%, sometimes reaching 30%. Yet over the past 70 to 80 years, they have not grown. They have seen absolute growth, but relative to developed countries, they have stagnated, thus falling into what we call the middle-income trap.

There are a few exceptions here, also Asian countries. As Ross mentioned earlier, one is red—Taiwan, part of China—and the blue, dark blue one is South Korea. Why does this phenomenon occur? I believe Ross provided a very insightful analysis earlier. Now, let me approach the same issue from a different angle by examining Latin America's path to industrialization. Take Daron Acemoglu, the Nobel laureate from MIT. His theories are not endorsed by any historian—they argue he completely misrepresents history. Yet economists agree with him because they lack historical understanding.

Now, let's examine Latin America's industrialization path. If we visualize it graphically, you can at least see there's a problem. According to this modular theory, they should have been highly successful since they adopted Western political systems, yet they were remarkably unsuccessful. Take Brazil as an example. The horizontal axis represents Brazil's level of industrialization, measured by the share of non-agricultural industries in total GDP. The higher the ratio relative to the US, the closer your industrialization level is to theirs. A very low ratio indicates significant distance from US industrialization levels. This primarily reflects the value of industrial output versus service sector output. If your industrialization path is correct, as industrialization advances, the vertical axis—per capita income relative to the US—should converge toward the US. But look at Brazil. As it industrialized—moving from left to right on the horizontal axis, then up the vertical axis—its per capita income seemed decent in the 1960s and 1970s. But as it progressed into the 1980s and 1990s, things became completely chaotic. Brazil lost its way, spinning in circles. And Brazil is still one of the better-off countries in Latin America.

Now look at Argentina's entire industrialization process. As industrialization advanced, its per capita income fluctuated relative to developed nations—sometimes higher, sometimes lower—but it essentially got stuck in a chaotic trap, unable to escape or chart a clear path forward. The government swung from left to right, then back to left; military juntas gave way to democratically elected governments, yet no viable solution emerged.

Looking at similar charts for Chile, it's unclear how industrialization should proceed—no clear path forward is visible. While Colombia's industrialization appears to be advancing steadily, its per capita income relative to developed nations shows no significant growth, remaining volatile. Peru's industrialization progressed smoothly in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, yet per capita income failed to rise. By the 80s and 90s, the situation deteriorated completely, with per capita income actually declining. Venezuela presents an even more striking case, moving in the opposite direction. In the 1950s, its level of industrialization and per capita income were relatively high, with per capita income once reaching 70% of the U.S. level. Using PPP terms, it was a high-income country. But as time passed, observe how it moved in this direction, deindustrializing, and its per capita income also declined. Why is that? The prevailing theory attributes Venezuela's decline to the Chavez government's adoption of socialism. That's incorrect. Chavez gained popular support precisely because capitalism failed to deliver on **basic** needs like Viagra.

Now let's examine East Asia and China. As Rose mentioned earlier from another perspective, consider Taiwan Province's industrialization path. As Taiwan industrialized—with the combined output of industry and services as a percentage

of GDP—it closed the gap with the United States. Concurrently, its per capita income approached U.S. levels, rising from a very low baseline (equivalent to 10% of U.S. income) to 80% of the U.S. income level during the high-income phase. **This is the PIP model.**

South Korea followed a similar trajectory. As industrialization advanced, per capita income steadily approached that of developed frontier nations. Turning to mainland China, during the 30 years before reform and opening up, per capita income remained largely unchanged. However, relative to developed countries—due to its extremely low starting point where agriculture dominated—it stood at just 5% of the U.S. level. Yet after this period, although per capita income did not see absolute growth relative to the U.S. (mirroring the U.S. pattern), it surged rapidly following reform and opening up.

What lessons can we draw from this? Is this merely superficial? Let me present India's data for comparison. India shares similarities with mainland China—as many noted this morning—having started from an extremely low baseline, also around 5% of developed nations' income levels, growing at a steady pace. However, after the 1990s, a noticeable upward trend emerged alongside industrialization, though current levels remain relatively low. In the previous chart on the low-income trap, we saw that India and Vietnam are currently the only two low-income economies in my three-part classification showing signs of breaking free from the low-income group, akin to Africa. Though they haven't yet entered the middle-income category, the signs are there.

Now, if I were to plot China's data here, where would India's level be? India, represented by this green line, roughly corresponds to China's level twenty years ago.

Looking at other indicators of industrialization, India lags behind China's development by about 15 to 20 years. To summarize—though these data only reveal correlations, not underlying mechanisms—where does this mechanism lie? I'll summarize it in a few sentences.

First, poverty. The root cause of poverty in any country is undoubtedly the lack of a large-scale production system. Traditional agricultural societies were poor because productivity was extremely low—a woman could only produce two garments in her lifetime. But once you master the technology for mass production, you can produce hundreds of thousands of garments in a single day, and the same applies to other goods. Therefore, a large-scale production system is the fundamental solution to poverty. The challenge, however, lies in making this large-scale production profitable. To generate profit, you must have a sufficiently large market to rapidly

absorb its output, continuously supply raw materials, and ensure capital circulation. This is undeniable. Adam Smith himself noted that the degree of specialization enhances productivity, yet this specialization is constrained by the size of the market—the "limited market." Smith stopped there and didn't go further. So how does the market emerge? Western economics has taught us many erroneous ideas. For instance, it claims markets emerge from political systems—those good political systems, like those in the West, naturally give rise to markets. This is incorrect. A market is a public good; it is a platform. As ordinary Chinese people understand, "the government builds the stage, and enterprises perform the show." Therefore, the market as a platform can only be created with the assistance of state power. Without a state, without state capacity, without a state possessing the wellness to create markets, markets will not emerge. This is the first crucial political principle. Second, creating a large-scale market requires mass production—scalable, large-scale manufacturing that yields profits. This applies not only to light industrial goods but also to heavy industrial products. Creating markets involves specific methods and scope, much like synthesizing chemical polymers: even with all elements present, incorrect methods or lacking catalysts will prevent obtaining the desired product. This is particularly crucial—something our textbooks in developing countries never taught us. By studying the industrialization history of European nations and examining China's developmental experience, you'll discover that market creation is an iterative process that cannot be bypassed. If you attempt to leap directly from a primitive stage to a high-end stage, you will inevitably face **numerous crises and setbacks**, ultimately becoming trapped in a cycle of stagnation.

Latin American countries followed a tropical model back then, creating markets through artificial means—which was fundamentally flawed. Markets must develop according to basic economic principles. For these agrarian nations, creating markets for small commodities required government intervention. Only after establishing markets for mass-produced light industrial goods could, they support heavy industrial products, enabling profitability in heavy industry. However, developing nations often rush to create markets for heavy industrial products right away. While some defense industries are indeed essential for national security, they represent only a portion of the economy. Without the support of light industry, defense industries not only fail to generate profits but also impose massive fiscal burdens, ultimately necessitating change. Therefore, regardless of the stage of development, governments must actively foster light industrial markets. Before establishing light industry, especially in agrarian nations, creating markets for small commodities is paramount. China's township enterprises in the 1980s and 1990s served precisely this purpose—laying the groundwork for large-scale light industrial production. Only with this market foundation can mass-produced light industrial goods become

profitable. This principle is crucial and demands robust capacity and sound industrial policies. **It should be said that politics should be the artillery, the must-carry—it should be the artillery.**

These political and economic principles have been overlooked by all Western economics since Adam Smith. Textbooks fail to teach us that markets are public goods requiring state intervention to create, nor do they explain that market creation demands a correct methodology and a step-by-step sequence. Thus, these principles must be systematically re-examined and validated. Today, China has reached this stage of development. If officials and intellectuals from developing countries merely take a cursory tour of China, they won't truly grasp this process or discern what constitutes a market. They'll return home and blindly imitate, which is a mistake. Many developing nations later went astray by imitating the West. They saw only the outcome of development, not the developmental process itself. They failed to study the causal relationships between cause and effect. Consequently, they imitated the West, mistaking its outcome for the cause and using it to justify political systems. But that outcome is the result, not the cause, nor a precondition for the result. Copying it will lead nowhere. Therefore, economics must fundamentally reexamine itself and rediscover economic laws. If economic development follows patterns and processes, we can divide it into several stages. Beginning with agrarian nations, there is the prototype industrialization phase; then comes the First Industrial Revolution, experienced by Britain in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The vast market created by this revolution then underpinned the Second Industrial Revolution—the heavy industrial revolution. Following the heavy industrial revolution, where machines replaced labor, the Information Revolution began its own transformation. Our Information Revolution is further divided into the Third and Fourth Industrial Revolutions. For developing nations, attempting to leap directly from an agricultural state to the Fourth Industrial Revolution is bound to fail. You must retrace the path successfully taken by developed nations that once followed this trajectory. Skipping stages 1, 2, 3, and 4 in an attempt to leapfrog today will not succeed. That concludes my remarks. Thank you.

2.3.3 Economy and National Liberation: Insights from China's Economic Development

• Speaker: John Ross

• Year: 2024

I would like to offer some preliminary thoughts on the relationship between economics and national liberation. When Xi Jinping was asked about the tasks facing the Communist Party of China during his first press conference after being elected General Secretary, he stated that the Party's mission is to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and make greater contributions to humanity.

This is an elaboration, within China's specific context, of Lenin's fundamental thesis: that patriotism in nations oppressed by imperialism is progressive, and that the national liberation of these nations therefore aligns with universal human conditions. But it must be understood that this cannot be interpreted chronologically. It is not that China first achieves national rejuvenation and then contributes to humanity. Rather, through the process of national rejuvenation, China contributes to humanity and to the future 150 years from now. It will not unfold in this exact manner, but none of us can know what the correct framework will be at that time.

I wish to connect this to Vijay's mention of the new wave of sentiment. I believe this is a highly accurate term—a new wave of development emerging from the Global South. Yet unless it translates into concrete policies, it cannot succeed. Concrete organizations, concrete initiatives. To advance this, we need economic policy, foreign policy, military policy, cultural policy, and policy on women. We require numerous policies and must formulate them. This conference is one such effort.

Fortunately, in the economic sphere, we can say we are more advanced than many other nations because we needn't debate theory. We know what has been achieved in economic revival and national liberation because China has already achieved them. But I wish to continue discussing other matters.

Part of this wave of sentiment stems from how people perceived China in 1992. I went to Russia because I knew early on that Gorbachev would create a disaster. In 1992, I wrote an article in Russia titled "Why Economic Reform Succeeded in Russia but Failed in China," whose argument speaks for itself. This reflects the shift in Russia's mindset at the time. People generally considered it a foolish idea. Many told me Russia had no need to learn from China. China was once an extremely poor country; we should learn from Germany, learn from Japan. Why are you so interested in China?

I replied, "Because it possesses the correct economic theory, China will achieve tremendous economic success. If you don't believe me now, let's revisit this discussion in ten years." Now, no one discusses this anymore. I love Russia deeply. I cannot control my emotions, cannot stop myself from speaking about these matters. I stood before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow, where 27 million fallen heroes lie buried. So, you can understand the weight of saving our continent from the shackles of Nazism and fascism. I cherish this nation profoundly. And now, this nation is forced to fight for its very survival—a brutal reality.

My Russian colleague's first meeting with me here last night was no coincidence. Russia is now compelled to save Europe—indeed, the world—from the scourge of fascism. It must fight once more for its revival, having endured the disasters of the Soviet Union's collapse and aggression against Russia. The war in Ukraine is Russia's defensive counteroffensive, a conflict that will determine Europe's future trajectory. My interpreter expressed this perfectly: "We face a choice: either become an independent nation or become America's gas station." I believe this statement succinctly captures the current situation.

Therefore, when I say Russia made a colossal mistake by failing to shoulder responsibility in 1992, it's not because I dislike the country. I noted President Putin's June report stating that domestic consensus in Russia holds China's economic development superior to the West's. I thought, my goodness, had this perspective existed 30 years ago, the entire world would be different.

But we are progressing. Now, we simply need to do our best within our current circumstances. Having presented these points, I wish to elaborate on why we understand this. First, consider China's development. I deeply admire Mao Zedong. The Chinese people united as one, dedicating themselves to national liberation and breaking free from imperialist rule. From another perspective, while China under Mao didn't achieve an economic miracle—its growth largely matched global averages—it did create a social miracle during his 27-year leadership. Life expectancy increased by 31 years. That means for every year Mao was in power, people lived one year longer. Setting aside national affairs, if someone gave you an extra 31 years of life, they'd be a truly good person.

After 1978, the economic miracle began to manifest, and people took notice, though they hadn't yet grasped its immense scale. China ranked among the world's ten fastest-growing economies, with a growth rate nearly four times that of the second-ranked economy. Today, most can name the fastest-growing economy. But do you know which country came in second? According to the data, Vietnam ranked second

in 1984—also a socialist country. So, first was socialist China, second was socialist Vietnam.

We needn't delve into what these studies imply about theoretical frameworks. Just examine the data. If the IMF, OECD, or similar organizations were truly objective, they'd declare: "These are the nations we must study—they've achieved remarkable success." Instead, they say, "No, don't emulate them." This is why, in economics, we're more advanced in transforming emotional currents into institutional frameworks.

Of course, this doesn't mean any country can replicate China. You can study its development characteristics, how to apply them, and so on. In terms of GDP per capita, China is even higher. China's economic growth rate is over four times that of the rest of the world. If you add up the totals from 1949, China was almost the poorest country in the world. Statistics show only ten countries had lower GDP per capita at that time. Today, according to the World Bank's classification, China is on the verge of becoming a high-income economy.

Of course, what matters isn't the concrete, steel, and all that. What matters is the improvement in people's lives. They live longer, are better educated, enjoy better health, can travel abroad for vacations, have more diverse tastes, and possess a wide variety of goods. That's what truly counts. This means China has leaped from being nearly the world's poorest nation to a high-income economy within a single generation. Isn't this the goal we want the world to achieve? Isn't this what every country in the Global South aspires to? If it can be achieved. Countless problems around the world would be resolved, and they could be resolved well.

Now I'd like to continue discussing the Global South, as there are some misconceptions here. This is what is sometimes referred to as the rise of the Global South. You could say it has grown from accounting for 32.2% of global GDP to 51.6%. But in reality, this chart is somewhat misleading, because this rise has only occurred in part of the Global South—specifically East Asia and South Asia. Other regions within the Global South have not experienced growth. The situation in Latin America is particularly regrettable—a region I hold in high regard—as it has actually regressed. Therefore, the rise of the Global South is not a straightforward narrative. Why is this the case?

It relates to economic investment issues. We can explore topics like how nations generate investment. As you see, East and South Asia exhibit higher investment levels, which explains their growth. This illustrates Asia's growth model, where investment exceeds 28% of GDP—far surpassing any other global region. Now, how is this achieved technically?

So I began researching this, which was a very lengthy process. It's not that China's average investment level surged rapidly in any single year. During this period, annual investment only accounted for 0.5% of GDP, but this 0.5% persisted for 40 years. This signifies a fundamental shift in economic investment.

Let's examine examples from other successful nations. While Vietnam and China represent the most successful socialist countries, this doesn't imply other nations achieved nothing. It's not necessary to follow China's socialist path—overthrowing a government through guerrilla warfare—to accomplish anything. That's not the case.

But let's examine some obvious examples. This is Indonesia. Aside from the Southeast Asian financial crisis, you can observe the same pattern where a slow GDP growth rate further slows the investment ratio. This is India. I won't delve into politics. But if we discuss economics, the long-term development of GDP investment drives rapid growth.

This is Bangladesh. The exact same pattern, rapid growth. This is what's known as the Asian development model. Now let's examine several other economies approaching the Asian development model. This is Turkey. Again, I won't engage in politics, simply because Asia was created by the West, and the West is pursuing insane economic policies. That's a lie. You can see similar patterns emerging from that developmental stage. These countries' economic trajectories resemble China's, though not at the same pace. They haven't done what Trump did, but their direction is identical. These are nations that have achieved success.

Then there's Ethiopia. It wasn't until an Ethiopian colleague came here that I truly wanted to understand the country. It's a successful positive case, and I genuinely wanted to know what happened. Then I discovered something had fallen off a cliff. This was due to factors like political crises and their consequences. So we get the reasons for its fall.

Prior to this, Ethiopia's long-term development had been successful. The rapid growth in Asia, China, and Vietnam didn't stem from Confucian culture or Western mysticism, but from increased fixed investment. Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim nation. Bangladesh and Turkey are also Muslim nations. India is a Hindu-majority nation. Ethiopia is Christian. It's not about Confucian culture; it's about success.

Another factor in China's success is its exceptionally high level of research and development. Its R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP has already surpassed that of three out of the seven industrialized nations. Although China still lags behind them, it is catching up. China far outpaces other Global South nations, with Turkey

nearly doubling the output of the second-tier Kentucky. This demonstrates that developing autonomous technology is crucial for achieving national liberation in the economic sphere. It signifies whether a nation can develop under immense imperialist pressure. Many nations have been crushed, yet others have succeeded.

To sustain autonomous investment growth, it must be coupled with domestic R&D self-reliance—a lengthy endeavor because the crux lies not in funding but in human capital. Cultivating talent from undergraduate studies to a PhD in engineering requires two decades. Thus, this is a protracted process. The percentage of R&D expenditure relative to GDP does not directly correlate with GDP growth. More precisely, this is not a long-term solution; the key lies in adjusting investment levels.

To summarize: achieving national liberation in economic development necessitates gradually establishing an autonomous R&D capacity or a national scientific institution tied to GDP growth. R&D is the wellspring of innovation. It's not about a genius sitting in a garage creating miracles; it's about R&D. But innovation must translate into investment; otherwise, it cannot change the world. It remains merely an idea, not action. R&D within innovation investment is intertwined with growth. Can any country replicate China? No, they cannot. But these are the elements of China's economic success.

From an economic theory perspective, this was entirely predictable. And it has indeed worked. This is the message we should convey to the world. Yet the recent awarding of the so-called Nobel Prize in Economics in the United States is truly absurd. Look at what achievements it has recognized. Once you know that the world's fastest-growing economy is socialist China, and the second fastest is Vietnam, your view of the world changes.

Thank you very much.

2.3.4 Constructive Market Models: The State's Systemic Integration Role in Strategic Sectors

- Speaker: Li Bo

- Year: 2024

According to China's development experience, for some strategic and foundational sectors, the sole reliance on market mechanisms often fails to bring necessary investment and construction. For these fields, it is integral to leverage the state's leading role in the market. At the macro level, the state creates a fair environment, optimizes infrastructure, cultivates talent, and offers financial and legal support. Moreover, the state delves into specific market segments, serving as a systematic integrator and stabilizer.

Take high-speed rail as an example. The rapid development of China's high-speed railway system would not have been possible without the overall planning by the former Ministry of Railways and the subsequent systematic integration undertaken by the China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. The corporation not only integrates multiple sectors such as engineering construction, equipment manufacturing and communication signaling, but also coordinates domestic and international suppliers to form stable long-term innovative partnerships. Although some rail lines cannot realize profitability in the short term, through unified planning and layout, the general high-speed railway network can break even and serve the long-term interests of the nation and society. This model effectively mitigates market uncertainties, a task which private enterprises struggle to undertake. In comparison, the high-speed rail project in California remains uncompleted after two decades due to the lack of a similar state-led mechanism.

The development of new energy vehicles (NEVs) also reflects the foresight and consistency of national strategy. As early as 1992, strategic scientist Qian Xuesen proposed bypassing the traditional internal combustion engine phase and directly developing electric vehicles. His suggestion received key support under the national "Eighth Five-Year Plan (1991-1995)". Subsequently, the collaboration among

enterprises, universities and research institutes advanced, with leading institutes including Tongji University working on battery and vehicle architecture. After decades of policy support and market cultivation, China has made breakthroughs in brands, technology and design in the NEV sector, securing a global leading position. However, state intervention is not always successful. For example, the attempt to exchange market access for technology in the traditional fuel vehicle sector failed to yield desired results, as international brands long maintained market dominance until the landscape was changed with the rise of the NEV sector.

China's development demonstrates that building a market system is an exploratory process which requires continuous learning from practice. "Crossing the river by touching the stones" entails risks but also fosters innovation. For Global South countries, the first step is to identify the most strategically significant and foundational industrial sectors and reasonably define the roles and responsibilities of state-owned enterprises, private enterprises and joint ventures in the market. Cooperation with foreign investment can be introduced when necessary. Additionally, they should draw on China's experience in capital market development, local government competition mechanisms and systematic integration models.

Through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and BRICS cooperation, China wishes to share its experience and solutions in market development and strategic sector growth with Global South countries, promoting common development and achieving mutual benefit and win-win outcomes.

Thank you all!

2.3.5 Critique of Neoliberal Policies: Lessons from Turkey's Experience

• Speaker: Gültekin Arik

• Year : 2024

The main guidelines of the neoliberal policies (an economic philosophy that advocates for free markets, deregulation, and privatization) dictated by the Global North to developing countries consist of three primary elements. Firstly, they focus on providing consumption goods rather than developing domestic productive capabilities. Secondly, these policies encourage the purchase of consumption goods from the Global North, as most are produced there. Thirdly, they advocate for minimizing the public sector's role in the global economy and privatizing all assets, enabling foreign capital to acquire and control formerly public-owned companies. Furthermore, global subsidies are often structured to transfer local production capabilities to foreign companies, purportedly to generate local wealth. Additionally, these policies emphasize the exploitation of untouched natural resources, such as mines, with the assistance of foreign capital.

In this context, Turkey has served as a practical laboratory for these neoliberal policies over the past two decades. During this period, almost 90% of functional and successful public brands have been privatized. These were subsequently sold either to foreign capital or to local capital groups deemed incompetent and closely affiliated with the government. While we oppose this trend, it does not imply an advocacy for a 100% state-controlled economy. Instead, private enterprises should justify their existence through efficiency, higher quality output, or reduced production costs, thereby demonstrating rationality. However, in Turkey's experience, these privatizations did not result in improved quality, reduced costs, or any other beneficial operational criteria; rather, they amounted to little more than a transfer of public assets to private entities.

The individual depicted, who served as the finance minister overseeing the privatization process, presided over the sale of numerous public institutions. Although these institutions may appear in small print on a list, each held significant strategic importance in the economy, including entities such as Turkish Telecom, steel and iron mills, aluminum factories, ports, and airports. These privatizations have yielded no positive outcomes; for instance, the privatized Turkish Telecom is known to operate with a substantial budget deficit. Furthermore, some institutions were closed down post-privatization, while others were transformed into unproductive entities such as shopping malls and luxury residential construction sites. As another example, Turkey's paper production factory, named SEKA, has been closed down. Consequently, Turkey now imports most of its paper needs,

leading to increased paper prices and undermining the nation's entire printed publishing sector, including newspapers and books. Ultimately, the privatization agency under the Ministry of Finance was closed, as there was nothing left to privatize.

Regarding agriculture, Turkey has historically been recognized as a fertile and agriculturally self-sufficient country. Throughout history, it has served as a cradle of agricultural civilizations, from ancient times through the Ottoman Empire. Even today, the Turkish people proudly assert that their country experiences all four distinct seasons simultaneously. Turkey is capable of producing almost any agricultural product on its land, with the exception of certain exotic fruits and vegetables. Until the 1980s, Turkey was a successful exporter of agricultural products. However, these neoliberal policies have systematically dismantled Turkey's agricultural sector through the following measures. Firstly, credit support to producers was critically diminished, and the prices of basic necessities such as fuel oil and fertilizers skyrocketed, particularly after 2013, influenced by policies dictated by the World Bank. Secondly, subsidies were provided to farmers in exchange for ceasing their agricultural production. Farmers were effectively placed on a "petrol list" by the government and the World Bank. These policies rendered agricultural production unattractive, leading to a total shrinkage of active arable land by up to 15%. Historically, Turkish tobacco and Turkish cotton were renowned agricultural products; currently, there is no production of these crops. Consequently, Turkey has ceased to be a center for agricultural production and has become a significant importer. The country now imports most of the agricultural products it once exported, including cereals, fruits, vegetables, meat, and even horse hay.

Mining has emerged as a central focus of neoliberal policies, despite its significant negative impact on the environment and agriculture. Prior to the neoliberal era, stringent regulations were in place for granting mining permits. These permits were subject to strict public control and limited in number; however, the mining sector was subsequently liberalized and extensively opened to both foreign and national capital. In a single year, 9,949 mining production permits (not prospecting permits) were issued to local and foreign companies. The government aims to offset the loss of wealth with income from mining, a policy that has resulted in the perforation of the fertile Anatolian land with numerous mining holes. This policy has, predictably, led to the inevitable destruction of the environment and agricultural lands. At most mining sites, farmers are forcibly prevented by police from accessing their fields to facilitate mining operations. A gold mining disaster occurred in İliç (formerly known as Erzincan) involving a Canadian-Turkish joint venture, which began with a landslide of processed soil, causing the deaths of multiple workers. Most critically,

there is a risk of cyanide leakage from the contaminated soil into the waters of the Great Euphrates River.

This tragic economic decline in Turkey and the Global South would not have been possible without the deliberate commitment of the incumbent government to the devastating and unpopular neoliberal policies of the Global North. This leads to the critical proposition that sustainable economic development in the Global South is, above all, a political problem. Therefore, we must define the minimal and reasonable political prerequisites for sustainable development: a political power closely linked to popular forces and their organizations is essential. This necessitates a government composed of workers, farmers, white-collar intelligentsia, small and medium producers, and artisans, characterized by openness and accountability. The decisions of such a progressive government should be open to public feedback and control. All forms of behind-the-scenes agreements are a probable source of corruption and, therefore, lead to failure.

Given our time constraints, we will not present a detailed scheme or formula for sustainable development. However, we would like to discuss two problems committed in the past by some progressive governments. The first mistake was strict economic nationalism and 100% nationalization. The idea of nationalizing and seizing foreign capital, and completely closing frontiers to all foreign capital, was a romantic ideal of the 1970s. This approach led to failure because developing countries clearly require foreign capital to revitalize their economies. The absence of investment capital within the country inevitably leads to economic slowdown and shortages. We are not advocating for full openness to foreign capital, but rather for its reasonable utilization. While full openness and complete restriction of foreign capital represent two extremes, every country has the right and duty to preserve and defend its national economic assets and resources. Therefore, a balanced approach must be found to guide foreign capital according to the following criteria. We can identify four main criteria for this situation. First, to utilize foreign capital for the production of goods that would otherwise be impossible to produce, or for the production of essential commodities. Second, to negotiate robustly for the equitable transfer of profits generated by foreign capital. Third, to simultaneously promote local brands and enable their coexistence with foreign brands. Finally, to make concerted efforts to absorb new foreign technologies and strive to develop them locally. All these objectives and criteria necessitate a strong, progressive government—a political power characterized by dedication and commitment to the interests of the people.

A second mistake is so-called "export activism," which renders a country's position in the world economy solely dependent on the export of raw materials. A developing

country may possess significant reserves of natural resources, such as minerals, oil, or raw agricultural products. This presents an opportunity to be leveraged for the country's benefit. However, if a country's capacity to generate wealth is confined to the export of these materials, this strategy becomes fragile for two primary reasons. Firstly, the international market prices of raw materials are subject to fluctuations due to numerous unpredictable factors. Secondly, the production of raw agricultural products is universally dependent on local climate conditions, meaning a poor crop season can lead to economic disaster for the country. An alternative approach is to secure a guaranteed position in the global market with competitive and value-added products, encompassing all industrial sectors, information technologies, and logistics, to achieve this industrial capability. A comprehensive national strategy should be established. Regarding infrastructure, the importance of roads, railways, and port projects should not be underestimated. However, the most critical component of infrastructure is a robust education system, coupled with strong research and development capabilities, as human capital represents the most vital asset. A strong, modern education system is the most significant leverage for a developing economy.

It is evident that such a development strategy will not be welcomed by the Global North, potentially leading to trade restrictions. Sanctions and embargoes are also potential threats for a progressive, popular, and patriotic government. However, the world is not solely composed of the Global North, and the multipolar character of the contemporary global landscape presents a crucial opportunity that must be fully leveraged. I conclude with a profound quote from the revolutionary leader, Chairman Mao Zedong: "Who are our friends and who are our enemies?" This is the most critical question of the struggle. In our context, our friends include progressive and socialist governments and countries such as China and Vietnam; nations managed by progressive social governments, like Venezuela or Brazil; and countries truly independent from the Global North, such as Russia, India, and Iran.

2.4 From Symbolic to Substantive Internationalist Practice

2.4.1 Sovereignty and Friendship: The Dialectics of Global South Solidarity

• Speaker: Liu Ye

• Year: 2024

Hello everyone, I am truly delighted to be here and to meet with all of you—friends, colleagues, and comrades. My topic is "Sovereignty and Friendship," as you can see. Interestingly, this panel's theme revolves not only around "sovereignty," but I also wish to explore the relationship between these two concepts.

Both are grand concepts. First, we know that "sovereignty," as a normative concept, originated in the West—particularly Europe—and was subsequently imposed globally. This raises numerous historical questions about sovereignty. One point I wish to highlight concerns its essential form: whether it is active or passive. This touches on how we understand sovereignty—as a condition, a process, or a movement.

The other concept to address is "friendship." In international relations or global order discourse, "friendship" is often loosely treated as a metaphor for geopolitical relations or a footnote to great power rivalry. But in reality, I wish to remind everyone that we must revisit the experience of the term "friendship" during the 20th century's climax of wars, revolutions, and popular uprisings. Thus, when discussing "friendship," we must consider whether it embodies more of a shared commonality, an interrelated common sense, or merely represents an alliance, a relationship of allies?

This marks the beginning of my topic. Naturally, when discussing sovereignty, we must first consider how non-Western societies comprehend it. Historically, we know that throughout the processes of colonization, imperialism, so-called free trade, and the global imperialist-capitalist system, every nation, society, and community became entangled within this empire-dominated global order. Thus, on one hand, we must acknowledge that all seem compelled to adopt and learn the term "sovereignty," mastering its use to articulate themselves. Yet, on another hand, this history of embracing sovereignty is also one of the Global South, the Third World, and socialist nations actively rewriting the concept of sovereignty.

Through their struggles, practices, negotiations, and diverse historical wisdom, these nations and peoples have continually expanded, deepened, and fundamentally reconfigured the concept of "sovereignty." Thus, today, when we speak of sovereignty, it indeed originates from European history, yet it has now become a

common project for all humanity, persisting amidst the contestation of diverse forces.

On this matter, we recognize that possessing and defending sovereignty serves as a means to safeguard national independence or autonomy. It fundamentally concerns security, constitutes a basic condition for further development, and forms the foundation for solidarity. Yet we must also acknowledge that "sovereignty" can sometimes establish legal barriers or boundaries that impede more advanced solidarity actions. This is a dialectical process that requires navigation.

Therefore, we must understand that sovereignty is not merely a normative term. In international relations, every actor claims to be a sovereign state, and to be recognized, one must be a sovereign state. Whether signing contracts or treaties, recognition of sovereignty is the foundation. But does this mean you truly possess independent and autonomous power? This actually depends on many factors. We must recognize that sovereignty is not merely a legal construct but an ongoing process—one that is both historical and substantive.

Another crucial point is that when we speak of "sovereign equality," it often sounds like a cliché within the international order or rules, a principle upon which relationships are frequently built. Yet we often fail to fully grasp that sovereign equality is an extraordinarily difficult state to achieve unless we create a truly revolutionary mode of negotiation and relations.

Therefore, in a sense, as I mentioned, it is not only a normative starting point but also a direction, a destiny—a path requiring complex relationships, solidarity, and concrete challenges to traverse. This has been understood from the outset. For instance, we might revisit the early national liberation movements in Africa.

As is well known, this represented the largest national movement in history. Within a remarkably short timeframe—five, ten, or fifteen years—most African nations gained independence, becoming new members of the international community, joining the United Nations and the broader Asian-African family. For instance, by the late 1950s, leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere began contemplating how to unite beyond merely existing as "empty sovereign nation-states." They recognized that possessing sovereignty in name alone—with small territories, sparse populations, and limited resources—offered no means to resist imperialism.

They recognized that sovereignty alone could not defeat imperialism; resistance through collective strength was essential. This was their vision: achieving unity before independence. Though many experiments were attempted, only one ultimately succeeded—the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, now known as

Tanzania. Of course, this national and pan-African hero waited months before establishing the Republic of Tanganyika, hoping other East African nations would join a larger federation. Yet this vision remained unfulfilled.

These historical lessons represent not only the consensus among African leaders but also reflect China's perspective. We know that Chairman Mao and the Chinese government have long supported the African unity movement. For instance, in 1962, when Chairman Mao received economic and women's delegations from Guinea, he emphasized two points: first, African nations should unite; second, this unity should expand to encompass a broader scope—the union of three continents: Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Chairman Mao further stated that China firmly supports African nations because they are revolutionary governments and parties tasked with liberating their peoples through revolutionary work. He cautioned that achieving independence should not lead to neglecting others—a principle equally applicable to China. He emphasized that "caring for others" entails offering friendly support and assistance. This underscores that sovereignty alone is ineffective; it only functions when united among sovereign nations. As stated, "No one can truly possess sovereignty unless everyone possesses sovereignty."

Yet other lessons demand reflection. For instance, Nyerere highlighted the importance of "sovereign solidarity" in 1970. This came at a watershed moment following the completion of the 1960s political movements, yet amid mounting economic hardships. He argued that no nation, people, or sovereign state should pursue narrow national interests at the expense of others. The only path to survival is collective survival. Such solidarity is not unattainable; it requires political consciousness and will to drive economic unity.

On the other hand, we must also reflect on certain lessons. Take, for instance, the large European organization, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). The CMEA achieved significant accomplishments, such as accounting for one-third of global industrial output, serving as a successful case study in raising living standards. Yet it also harbored inherent problems, such as advancing solidarity in ways that could lead to tendencies restricting sovereignty. Such solidarity might evolve into center-periphery or vertical relationships, disregarding the sovereignty of each nation.

This brings to mind Chairman Mao's 1971 address upon sending China's first delegation to the United Nations. He emphasized the need to build an international united front. Yet this differed fundamentally from the domestic united front, which was based on proletarian dictatorship requiring no negotiation or compromise. The

international arena, involving diverse nations, cultures, civilizations, and sovereignties, presented entirely different dynamics.

Therefore, Chairman Mao emphasized that the only way to achieve this international united front is through mutual consultation, not by determining who leads whom. It is not a matter of one country being the leader while others follow. If we operate in this manner—even adopting approaches from the left, such as the Soviet experience—it may run counter to our original intentions.

So, in summary, what should we expect, or what should we do? How can we genuinely achieve unity among the Third World or the Global South? This unity must be grounded not in political slogans or passion, but in real, meaningful, concrete political practices that carry substantive weight in economic relations. Simultaneously, how can we ensure economics and politics are inextricably linked? Not merely economics within market or trade systems, but an economy that is explicitly and unapologetically political.

I believe only through this approach can we truly achieve solidarity among peoples. This is a form of people's democracy. I must emphasize that abstract "economic man" models cannot create a real world. We might build a so-called globalized world, but one entirely divorced from reality. That is not our goal.

Finally, I wish to say that the possible path forward for all of us in the Global South should be one of mutual aid and cooperation, not a vast supranational structure. This union of political identity, while a necessary bond, should be more about friendship than alliance. Indeed, friendship implies that all are equal and autonomous.

Moreover, we require economic support, not merely simple market principles. We must ensure markets serve the people rather than rely on them. In this sense, perhaps a philosophical foundation underpins this: every political community is both autonomous and inherently interconnected with others.

In this way, we need not envision a grand organization or entity that formally unites all people but rather seek a form of independent unity—or a concrete universality. This is what I wish to discuss today. Thank you very much.

2.4.2 Global South Cooperation in the Tradition of Internationalism: The Case of China-Brazil Agricultural Collaboration

• Speaker: Luiz Zarref

• Year: 2024

Throughout nearly two centuries of the international communist movement, internationalism has remained the core bond uniting peoples and nations. Marx and Engels foresaw the historical inevitability of capitalist modes of production achieving global hegemony, thereby establishing internationalism as the fundamental program of action for the proletariat. Guided by this theory, revolutionary parties worldwide successfully forged transnational alliances in the 20th century, profoundly reshaping the course of human civilization.

The core value of contemporary internationalism lies in establishing an international order that serves the fundamental interests of all peoples, rather than catering to specific hegemonic systems. Only by adopting a socialist perspective on globalization can we penetrate the essential nature of capitalist exploitation, transcend the superficial games of bourgeois diplomacy, and accurately grasp the deep-seated laws of international class struggle. Historical practice demonstrates that it is precisely through the sustained application of internationalism that revolutionary ideals retain their vitality amid the mists of history—even during exceptional periods when civilization faces major setbacks, they continue to chart the course forward for human society.

The pathways to realizing internationalism are diverse, yet the following three pillars can be regarded as core elements of Global South internationalism. First, most Global South nations remain in the form of typical nation-states, with governance structures dominated by bourgeois political parties. These ruling groups generally exhibit the profit-seeking characteristics of capital and often fail to fully commit to national sustainable development. Their core objective lies in controlling strategic resources such as land, water bodies, minerals, and biodiversity, perpetuating the resource extraction model established during the colonial era. As Vijay noted, the dominance of agribusiness and extractive industries in regional economies fundamentally stems from the capitalist mode of production, not regional differences in natural endowments.

The pathways to realizing internationalism are diverse, yet the following three pillars can be regarded as core elements of Global South internationalism. First, most Global South nations remain in the form of typical nation-states, with governance structures dominated by bourgeois political parties. These ruling

groups generally exhibit the profit-seeking characteristics of capital and often fail to fully commit to national sustainable development. Their core objective lies in controlling strategic resources such as land, water bodies, minerals, and biodiversity, perpetuating the resource extraction model established during the colonial era. As Vijay noted, the dominance of agribusiness and extractive industries in regional economies fundamentally stems from the capitalist mode of production, not regional differences in natural endowments.

Second, transnational popular solidarity should form the bedrock of people's diplomacy. Systematic research by Brazilian youth scholars on grassroots organizing experiences in Latin America provides empirical evidence for this. Third, a strategic planning framework must be established to coordinate grassroots demands, building an institutional system encompassing government agencies, national capacity-building, and coordination with capital forces to ensure the bourgeoisie effectively fulfills its national development obligations.

A prime example of implementing such internationalist principles is the International Association for People's Cooperation (IAPC/Baobab). Established in 2019, this organization has served for five years as a collaborative platform for popular movements in the Global South. It focuses on building bridges for scientific and technological cooperation among popular movements, academic institutions, and governments, prioritizing the fundamental needs of people worldwide.

Agriculture has historically been the core domain of human production systems and a crucial battleground for class struggle. Land tenure and ownership issues, as central elements of deep-seated contradictions, hold key significance in understanding the real-world challenges facing Global South nations. Amidst the restructuring of global production chains, the strategic value of agricultural products within trade systems continues to rise. This has created a vicious cycle where cyclical food crises compound environmental degradation—capitalist agricultural production paradigms, through practices like deforestation and chemical abuse, are accelerating irreversible damage to ecosystems.

Notably, in regions like Latin America, agricultural oligarchies have evolved into agents of international capital interests by restructuring their political-economic alliances. The transnational conglomerates—agro-industrial groups—formed over the past three decades constitute a composite network of local agricultural monopoly capital and Northern transnational corporations. Through strategic coordination mechanisms, these groups collude with transnational media conglomerates and far-right forces.

The technological paradigm of the agribusiness system originates from the Green Revolution's technical framework, manifested in hybrid and genetically modified breeding techniques, industrial-scale application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, large-scale mechanized operations, and monoculture farming. These characteristics have fully integrated agricultural production into the capitalist industrial system, accelerating its deep integration with financial capital in contemporary times. In dialectical opposition, the peasantry—an agricultural producer class rooted in local characteristics—is attempting to build class subjectivity capable of countering the capitalist monopoly system through global collective action.

Visual documentation from settlements of Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (MST) reveals that within an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist framework, the peasant class is committed to advancing global solidarity. They are establishing the Peasants' organization and forming a cohesive class agenda centered on core demands like food sovereignty and ecological agriculture. Traditional struggle platforms such as land reform and land rights protection have gained reform momentum, simultaneously charting new strategic horizons for socialist movements in the Global South.

Against this backdrop, systematically mastering scalable food sovereignty technology systems and ecological agriculture models has become urgent. To this end, the International People's Cooperation Association advances technology sharing through two pathways: First, direct knowledge transfer mechanisms based on interpersonal collaboration and institutional linkage. Global farmer organizations have accumulated rich technical expertise through long-term practice. Facilitating cross-regional knowledge exchange can effectively enhance organizational effectiveness and overcome critical technical barriers. The second is the implementation of the International Bio-input Training Program, which employs a 21-day modular teaching system combining theory and practice, with knowledge sharing conducted by farmer leaders and organic intellectuals. The inaugural training commenced in Argentina in 2023, followed by regional expansion into Asia with Nepal in the subsequent year. Brazil hosted the third training session in 2024, and the inaugural African regional training is scheduled for Tanzania in the first half of 2025. To date, farmer organizations from over 30 countries have participated in this transnational technical exchange initiative.

The second pathway aims to establish institutional frameworks that foster strategic collaboration mechanisms between governments, political parties, and think tanks based on popular movements. The most representative success story in this domain is the innovative practice of integrating traditional agricultural producers into the

China-Brazil cooperation agenda. As China and Brazil mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2024, particular attention should be paid to the strengthened bilateral ties during the Workers' Party administration since the 2010s. Even before international consensus emerged, this cooperation became a model for coordinated development among Global South nations, with the establishment of the BRICS mechanism as a key outcome.

The current structural contradiction in cooperation lies in the imbalance of interests within Brazil's agricultural and mineral product trade. Although bilateral trade exceeded \$140 billion this year, it remains heavily concentrated in primary product exports. This monolithic economic structure objectively provides a platform for political forces questioning China-Brazil cooperation and advocating neoliberal models, hindering the full realization of the partnership's political and economic potential. From an agricultural foundation perspective, the two nations share profound commonalities: China's 240 million farming households control over 90% of production units, while Brazil, despite ranking among the world's highest in land concentration, relies on 4 million farming households that not only contribute 70% of the nation's grain production but also exhibit production models and socialized management concepts that align remarkably well.

The following three case studies illustrate progress in bilateral cooperation. First, China has achieved internationally leading capabilities in solid organic waste resource recovery technologies, enabling efficient conversion of organic waste into high-quality organic fertilizers. As the world's fourth-largest producer of organic waste, Brazil currently recycles only 0.3% of its organic waste. Through a trilateral cooperation mechanism established with experts from China Agricultural University and environmental technology enterprises, Brazil is systematically planning the construction of a new industrial system for organic waste treatment. This project has received key support from the New Development Bank and its President, Dilma Rousseff.

Second, China's R&D and manufacturing capabilities for intelligent agricultural machinery rank among the world's best. This year, both sides jointly advanced the construction of two China-Brazil family farm mechanization demonstration centers, aiming to establish an agricultural machinery technology promotion system tailored to tropical agriculture. Third, China has achieved historic accomplishments in eradicating extreme poverty, leading both countries to establish a new poverty reduction cooperation framework with the International People's Cooperation Association participating as a key partner.

Building on the consecutive successes of the "China-Brazil Poverty Reduction and Rural Revitalization Forum" (2022-2023), both nations have established a regularized tripartite exchange mechanism involving government agencies, urban-rural community organizations, and technology providers. This mechanism focuses on developing comprehensive solutions tailored to the realities of developing countries. Practice has proven that eradicating hunger and poverty has become a crucial cornerstone for deepening strategic collaboration among Global South nations.

These three exemplary cases, along with numerous others not enumerated here, are widely regarded in Brazil as potential milestone events in the Sino-Brazilian cooperation process. Such cooperative breakthroughs transcend superficial adjustments or merely adding agenda items to bilateral consultations. They signify a qualitative leap in bilateral relations, profoundly advancing the strategic convergence of the fundamental interests of both peoples. This substantive leap validates the core spirit of internationalism I previously articulated.

Fellow comrades from the Global South, the grand vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind is a practice proposition of immense contemporary value. This concept should not be confined to halls of power and official documents but must be deeply rooted in the real-life landscapes of the three billion people in the Global South. In the contemporary international political arena, we should contribute our strength to the global practice of the socialist cause and the contemporary inheritance of the spirit of internationalism.

2.4.3 The Vision and Challenges of China-Africa Joint Modernization

- Speaker: Fred M'membe

- Year: 2024

President Xi's speech at this year's China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC), where he proposed the shared modernization vision for the 2.8 billion people of China and Africa, is unprecedented in human history. This initiative marks the first time such a clear proposal has been put forward, closely linking the development visions of the Chinese and African peoples.

For Africans, who have endured centuries of enslavement, humiliation, exploitation, colonization, and neo-colonization by others, there is no sensible alternative to President Xi's initiative for China and Africa to join hands in promoting modernization. This initiative offers a more just, fair, humane, and reasonable opportunity to end centuries of humiliation, marginalization, subjugation, exploitation, and resource plunder.

I say this with utmost confidence because President Xi's initiative is open and win-win. It is people-oriented, diverse, inclusive, eco-friendly, peaceful, and secure. Crucially, it does not undermine our independence and sovereignty; rather, it strengthens them. Without our sovereignty, we are nothing; and if we are nothing, we cannot modernize and develop, as nothing good comes out of nothing.

President Xi's initiative represents a brand-new path of modernization that belongs to all the people of the world, to all humanity. It is, indeed, a vision for modernization from the Global South.

President Xi also proposed ten major partnership activities for China and Africa to work together to promote modernization. These activities specifically aim to foster a common path of modernization for China and Africa through mutual learning between civilizations, trade prosperity, industrial chain cooperation, interconnection development cooperation, health initiatives, promoting agriculture for the benefit of the people, cultural exchanges, green development, and building security together.

While this sounds exciting, and indeed it is, we should not fool ourselves or allow ourselves to be fooled into believing that it will come easily or on a silver platter. There are inherent problems and challenges. Those who have dominated, exploited, and humiliated us for centuries do not wish for us to escape their influence; they desire to continue their exploitation and humiliation.

The United States military maintains a large presence in Africa, continually seeking to expand it through Africom (United States Africa Command), establishing bases and offices across the continent. The U.S. employs various methods to instigate color revolutions in Africa and support pro-U.S. puppet regimes. Furthermore, the U.S. competes with China in the economic and trade spheres and leverages its media hegemony to distort and smear China's image in Africa.

The second challenge lies within African countries themselves: their administrative capacity and sense of struggle are not yet fully developed. Africa's Western-style electoral politics has often led to wavering stances and a lack of policy continuity among ruling parties. Moreover, the long-term intellectual extraction by Western countries has resulted in a general weakness in the administrative capacity of African nations, compounded by insufficient investment in capacity building. These factors frequently prevent African countries from properly receiving support from China, thereby undermining the efficiency, effectiveness, and orderliness of cooperation.

The third challenge is that cooperation projects presented by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have indeed encountered a number of implementation problems. For example, some Chinese companies lack communication with local African trade unions and even refuse to cooperate with them, believing that only relations with the government are necessary. Without the mediation of trade unions, minor frictions in daily work cannot be communicated and resolved in a timely manner. These issues sometimes escalate into major conflicts and are even exploited by ill-intentioned media, damaging the image of China-Africa cooperation in the hearts and minds of the African people.

China's friends need to understand that most African countries do not have a strong ruling party that represents the fundamental interests of the broad masses of the people, as China does. Many political elites in Africa seek only votes and personal interests, rather than serving the people. China's friends should recognize that the people of Africa, along with the left-wing political parties, trade unions, and people's movements that represent them, are China's staunchest friends and comrades.

As the Belt and Road Initiative enters its second decade and China and Africa begin a new chapter of working together to promote modernization, we hope to build on the foundation of China-Africa relations to further enhance friendship, exchanges, and cooperation between the Chinese and African peoples. This will enable us to jointly address objective challenges and advance our efforts towards the modernization of the 2.8 billion people of China and Africa.

2.4.4 BRICS+: Why Option Value Matters for ASEAN

- Speaker: Gita Wirjawan
- Year: 2025

1. Introduction

The global political landscape has undergone significant structural transformation since the mid-twentieth century. Following the rapid expansion in the number of sovereign states after decolonization, leaders of newly independent Asian and African nations convened in the 1955 Bandung Conference to articulate a collective aspiration for anti-colonialism, peaceful coexistence, and strategic autonomy (Reybrouck, 2024). This spirit was institutionalized further through the 1961 Non-Aligned Movement (Prashad, 2008).

Seven decades later, members of the Global South—including Southeast Asian states—continue to navigate a global order characterized by intensifying strategic rivalry, shifting economic power, and new forms of geopolitical alignment. Indonesia’s decision on 6 January 2025 to join BRICS+ can be viewed as an extension of this historical trajectory: a contemporary search for a more inclusive and multipolar international system (Waters & Putrono, 2025).

This paper argues that ASEAN possesses substantial “option value” in the emerging multipolar order, and that Indonesia’s entry into BRICS+ demonstrates the exercise of this optionality. Such option value derives from ASEAN’s scale, economic dynamism, and capacity to strategically engage multiple major powers while maintaining autonomy. However, realizing this value depends on institutional factors—particularly the rule of law and the region’s ability to convert uncertainty into measurable risk—both of which enable effective capital formation.

2. Discussion

Southeast Asia today comprises a population of roughly 700 million people and a combined GDP of approximately USD 4 trillion. With the exception of Singapore and Brunei, ASEAN economies remain in the upper-middle-income or lower-middle-income categories, typically earning less than USD 13,205 in GDP per capita. Their economic pulse closely aligns with that of the broader Global South, characterized by aspirations for industrial upgrading, access to technology, and enhanced geopolitical agency.

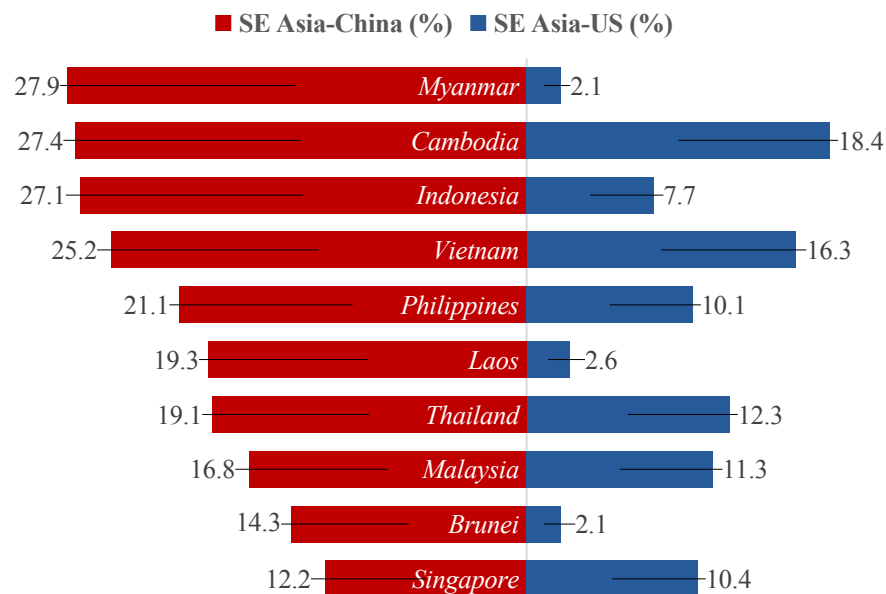
ASEAN’s economic ties reflect this position. Engagement with multiple economic centers—China, the United States, Japan, the European Union, India, and increasingly the Gulf Cooperation Council—creates a diversified opportunity structure. Such structural openness is precisely what gives the region its option

value, allowing ASEAN states to adjust, hedge, or leverage strategic partnerships in a fluid strategic environment.

Indonesia's decision to join BRICS+ can be interpreted through the lens of real-options logic. In uncertain environments, the ability to defer, diversify, or adjust strategic choices has intrinsic value. Membership in BRICS+ enhances Indonesia's—and potentially ASEAN's—ability to: 1) expand access to new pools of technological and economic capital, particularly from China and India, 2) hedge geopolitical risks arising from intensifying U.S.–China competition, and 3) participate in emerging financial, trade, and digital infrastructure platforms, such as BRICS payment mechanisms, development financing, and technology cooperation (Wirjawan, 2025). The decision does not negate existing partnerships with the United States, the European Union, or Japan. Rather, it increases the strategic menu of choices, strengthening ASEAN's bargaining position across multiple axes of major-power engagement.

Among BRICS members, China remains the most significant source of both technological and economic capital. China–ASEAN economic relations almost USD 1 trillion in trade in the previous year, eclipsing ASEAN–U.S. trade, which stood at approximately half that amount (Araral, 2025)—see Figure 1. Economic capital flows from China to ASEAN have become increasingly organic, driven by commercial complementarities and China's role as a global manufacturing center.

Figure 1. Share of trade between ten Southeast Asian countries with China vs. the US, 2024



Sources: WTO, Comtrade, Econovis via Voronoi (<https://www.voronoiaapp.com/trade/>)

However, the more consequential long-term dimension is technological capital allocation. Chinese technological solutions—whether in digital infrastructure, renewable energy, transportation, or industrial modernization—remain relatively cost-effective and accessible for developing economies. While China historically excelled at incremental innovation (“1 to the next digit”), it is rapidly advancing toward frontier innovation (“0 to 1”), particularly in areas such as artificial intelligence, electric mobility, and renewable technologies (Maslej, 2025; He et al., 2022; Hove, 2024). For ASEAN countries seeking to move up the global value chain, access to such technological capital constitutes a critical vector for industrial upgrading and productivity growth.

Despite the opportunities presented by BRICS+ and China’s technological rise, the extent to which ASEAN and the broader Global South can benefit depends on two structural conditions. The first is rule of law, which is indispensable for capital formation. Predictable regulatory frameworks, contract enforceability, and legal certainty shape the willingness of firms—domestic or foreign—to make long-term investments. Second, and equally important factor, is the capability to translate uncertainty into measurable risk. Whereas uncertainty is unquantifiable and uninvestable (“unknown unknown”), risk (“known unknown”) can be priced, managed, and allocated. This translation requires data governance, regulatory consistency, credible institutions, and managerial wherewithal. Where these are lacking, investment is constrained not by ideology or geography but by the inability to provide sufficiently predictable environments.

However, human capital remains a binding constraint on Southeast Asia’s long-term capital formation is its human-capital gap. China produces approximately 4–4.5 million STEM graduates annually, and India 2–2.5 million, compared to ASEAN’s roughly 750,000 (Olis et al., 2023). This disparity significantly shapes foreign direct investment (FDI) patterns. ASEAN’s annual FDI inflows total around USD 200–230 billion, but the distribution is uneven, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. FDI (USD, billions) and FDI per Capita (USD), Southeast Asia plus China, 2021

Sources: Statistics Indonesia (<https://www.bps.go.id/indicator/13/1840/1/realisasi-investasi-penanaman-modal-luar-negeri-menurut-provinsi.html>); CEIC (<https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/foreign-direct-investment>); Trading Economics (<https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/foreign-direct-investment>).

These outcomes correlate strongly with the region's limited STEM capacity and persistent reliance on patronage-based, rather than meritocratic, recruitment systems. Addressing these structural impediments is essential for leveraging the full benefits of technological capital allocation—whether from BRICS members or other global partners.

3. Conclusion

ASEAN stands at a pivotal moment in the evolution of the global order. Indonesia's accession to BRICS+ reflects both a historical continuity with the principles of Bandung and a forward-looking strategy to enhance national and regional optionality within a more complex multipolar system.

The potential benefits—expanded access to technological capital, enhanced strategic autonomy, and participation in alternative financial and digital ecosystems—are substantial. Yet realizing these opportunities requires strengthening domestic institutional foundations, particularly the rule of law, risk translation capabilities, and STEM-based human capital.

In this context, BRICS+ should not be viewed as an exclusive alignment, but as an additional strategic instrument—one that enhances ASEAN's ability to navigate uncertainty and advance its developmental aspirations in the decades ahead.

Endnotes

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2.4.5 Russia's Role in Supporting Global South Cooperation

- Speaker: Oleg Balabanov

- Year: 2025

In the conference, I'd like to express my gratitude to the organizers, to the East China Normal University, with whom we cooperate very closely for many years; and the Tricontinental Institute for this invitation.

Before I'd like to stress the focus on the historical heritage of the Soviet policy and the Soviet support in the decolonization process. It was started in mid-50s with the Bandung Declaration, with the Asia-Africa conference. The Soviet Union always supported the Bandung principles, tried to implement them in real foreign policy. Also, now that we have the anniversary of the Bandung Conference this year, we, the Valdai Club, my think tank, and Indonesian colleagues, have prepared a special report on the historical meaning of the Bandung Conference - what does it mean for Indonesian youth now? - because we have some young experts from Indonesia, among others. It's an important point, and the spirit of Bandung is still valid and valid for Russia as well. Also, we supported and cooperated with the Non-Aligned Movement and the struggle for peace.

Then the next point, the economic and cultural help of the Soviet Union to decolonized countries, to independent countries in Asia and Africa, and especially our help and support to socialist countries and people's democracy countries worldwide. Let's remember Cuba. Let's remember Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, and many others.

Next, in the current situation, we in Russia think that Shanghai Cooperation Organization is the real cornerstone of common security and development for Eurasia. The organization is developing quite positively, promoting the spirit of mutual trust and cooperation among member states. And we also see the joint efforts of the SCO members in strengthening security and fighting against terrorism in Eurasia.

There is another point: we welcome the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. There are already many practical steps done for convergence between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union, which unites Russia and several other post-Soviet countries in Eurasia. We also surely promote the mutually fruitful China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership, which you can see is a really important thing for Russian security, for Russian development.

Then the BRICS. It's clear that it became a symbol of solidarity, of global majority of Non-West and South. Surely, Russia is not in the South geographically, but I think that we can name Russia now as a part of Global South politically. At least we can also use more larger terms like Global Non-West or Global Majority, which is quite diffused in Russia. Now, we see the enlargement of BRICS as a sign of its important status. Also, we see the evolution of the BRICS Spirit. I have to say that it was our Chinese friends who first introduced the term, the BRICS Spirit, in the BRICS Summit Declaration in 2017, when it was in China, then it was repeated during the next Chinese presidency in 2022. And after that, the term, the concept of BRICS Spirit remained in all following BRICS Declarations.

Now, practical tasks. First, I think what we need to do for BRICS and the SCO is to strengthen real solidarity. I wouldn't like to say the united front, but maybe vis a vis Trump's attacks on BRICS members and on Global South in general, on de-dollarization, on tariffs and so on. For example, this summer, my think tank the Valdai Club, we had a conference in South Africa with our South African colleagues. They expressed very openly that because South Africa became, unfortunately, one of the main targets for Donald Trump in his attacks, they wanted more solidarity from BRICS members, they wanted more support from BRICS members, not to be left alone, vis a vis Trump and the United States. The same later was expressed by Brazilian colleagues. We see that there was an extraordinary BRICS Online Summit organized on the Brazilian presidency, exactly on how to react to Trump's attack. But we see until now that all BRICS countries continue to negotiate with Trump on bilateral basis. It's the case of China, it's the case of India, it's the case of Russia, and almost all other countries. So, what we need now is to pass from symbol to practice, and more cooperation is needed in economy and finance; I totally agree with Paulo (Paulo Nogueira Batista Jr.), what you said about the New Development Bank and many other things.

And also, for me, it seems important to strengthen independent agendas in SCO, and especially in BRICS. I've published half a year ago a special report on the evolution of BRICS platform of shared values on the Valdai website. And I've seen that, at least until very recent years, there was a kind of translation of an agenda from other institutions to the BRICS. First, some concept was discussed at the G7 meeting; half a year or one year later, it's repeated at the G20 meeting; and 2 years later, it's repeated at the BRICS meeting. So it is just following the Western agenda, not promoting our own initiatives. Maybe the first breakthrough was done in 2014, when there was the first South African presidency in BRICS, there were at last our own BRICS proposal of support and financial assistance for African countries. Then under the Brazilian presidency of BRICS, the New Development Bank was structured. But still we see the limitations. Paulo already mentioned some of them.

We have a pool of contingency reserves within the BRICS. We have some problems, huge financial problems with some, for example with Ethiopia - why not to use our own contingency reserve to support the BRICS members. And instead, Ethiopia was obliged to apply to the IMF, with all the IMF limitations, human rights agenda, and so on.

Also, the last point, I think we have to strengthen our unified, united, cooperating, whatever term, position of the Global Non-West and South in the G20. Because in the G20, all the Western countries, all the Western half of G20, they speak with one voice, with one consolidated voice, with one consolidated position. And positions of Global South countries are diverse. It means that the G20, in one scenario, just accepts in a soft way some Western proposals. In a hard way, it doesn't decide nothing. We have to change this position, so that the voice of the Global South, of the Global Non-West could be more solid within the G20 vis a vis Western partners.

That's what I wanted to say. There are two reports of the Valdai Club that I mentioned, on the Bandung Conference, and on the BRICS platform of shared values.

Thank you very much.

2.5 From Capacity Erosion to Capacity Reconstruction—The Structural Predicament of the Global South

2.5.1 Beyond the Washington Consensus: The Multifaceted Role of the State in Economic Development

• Speaker: Bongani Ngqulunga

• Year: 2024

The debate in South Africa leading up to the transition to democracy and beyond has revolved around two major perspectives regarding development generally and economic development in particular. The question addressed, from the Global South perspective, is whether a new consensus on economic development is emerging, reflecting on the South African experience.

The first perspective emphasizes the role of capitalist investment in bringing about economic growth. For those who have studied development economics, this view emphasizes the private sector and minimizes the role of the state. The state's role, in this perspective, is to create a conducive environment to attract private sector investment. The second perspective, conversely, emphasizes the crucial role the state should play in economic development. These two perspectives have, in a sense, played themselves out in South Africa over the past 30 years of democracy. According to this second perspective, the state should not only create an environment to attract capital and investment but should also invest itself.

The first school of thought, which posits the private sector as the leading force in driving economic growth and addressing what is known in South Africa as the triple challenge of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, has largely been the dominant paradigm. Thus, the actions taken in South Africa over the past three decades have largely been informed by this dominant paradigm. However, despite the South African government's full commitment to private sector-led development, it did not result in significant private sector investment. In South Africa, the literature frequently refers to this phenomenon as the "investment strike"—where the game is played according to the Washington Consensus (an economic policy framework that advocates for free markets, deregulation, and privatization), but major private sector investment fails to materialize.

Consequently, this reliance on private sector-led economic development has shifted discussions and debate in South Africa towards considering the respective roles that both the private sector and the state can play in fostering economic development and addressing the persistent challenges of inequality, poverty, and unemployment.

While it is generally accepted that the private sector should play a significant role, there is also an acceptance that the state itself has an important part to play. While it is generally accepted that the state should play a role, the precise nature of this role warrants closer examination.

This can be conceptualized as a spectrum of state intervention, ranging from minimal to more extensive engagement. At its most basic level, based on our experience, the state should cultivate a policy environment conducive to private capital investment. This approach aligns with propositions made by proponents of the Washington Consensus. This entails, for instance, the state establishing a stable and predictable political and policy climate that facilitates long-term investment, alongside entrenching a culture where the rule of law consistently prevails.

However, there is much more that the state can do beyond these minimalist roles. For instance, the state could invest in developing a skilled labor force and supporting efforts that create jobs and grow the economy. A state that possesses the resources and capabilities to operate an effective and efficient education system, for instance, is quite critical and should not be taken for granted. This is particularly critical when viewed from the perspective of the Global South, where the capabilities of states to operate efficient education systems should not be taken for granted. Therefore, this is a crucial consideration as we contemplate the emergence of a new consensus on economic development.

The experience of the South African state demonstrates that investing huge amounts in the education sector may be a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition. What is also important is to ensure that the resources invested yield returns. The state can spend a lot of money, as it has in South Africa, investing in education, but without mechanisms to ensure that these investments yield tangible returns, the funds allocated may effectively be wasted.

Another significant role for the state in fostering economic development, particularly from a Global South perspective, warrants consideration. The preceding speaker highlighted the importance of infrastructure investment. While this role of the state is generally accepted, it cannot be assumed in all countries of the Global South, given the substantial investments required to enable economic development. For example, commodity-exporting nations like South Africa must invest in essential infrastructure such as roads and ports, without which their commodities cannot be efficiently exported. The challenges currently faced by South Africa's network industries demonstrate how such issues can significantly impede economic performance. Furthermore, the state plays a vital role in facilitating social development. Drawing from the South African experience, the failure of the state to

provide essential services, such as electricity or energy, can severely undermine economic development.

These interventions, however, are often easier said than done. Not every country in the Global South possesses the resources and capabilities to undertake all the necessary infrastructure investments. Therefore, a fundamental question arises regarding the appropriate funding sources for infrastructure development. The experience from South Africa and other parts of the Global South suggests a need to explore beyond traditional funding sources. This includes considering a range of possibilities, such as state partnerships with the private sector, and leveraging multilateral institutions like the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) bank to secure funding for economic development.

This represents, in essence, the state's secondary role: providing supporting services and critical infrastructure to bolster economic development. One could consider a third degree of state intervention to further support economic development. This involves the state offering direct support to specific industries, extending beyond the provision of infrastructure and critical services. In this sense, it represents the state's role in "choosing winners," a more challenging task that presupposes capabilities often lacking in the Global South. For instance, there may be a compelling argument for the state to pivot towards energy-saving green industries, given their widely acknowledged criticality. However, the question remains whether states in the Global South possess the requisite capabilities to effectively support such green industries. The answer to this question, in many respects, depends on the specific circumstances faced by society and each state, including the availability of expertise, resources, and capabilities at the state's disposal.

The array of choices available to each state is, of course, contingent upon the external environment. This is where the theme of the Global South becomes particularly pertinent, as it necessitates an examination of the current geopolitical landscape and the opportunities, threats, and complexities it presents. The rise of the Global South, exemplified by the expansion of BRICS+ (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, plus new members), presents a significant opportunity for increased trade and investment among its member states. This emergence also highlights the potential for transforming global power relations. The critical challenge for the Global South, therefore, is not merely to forge closer economic relations but to collaborate in transforming the global economic and political order to promote fair, equitable, and inclusive economic growth.

Conversely, dominant powers will inevitably contest this challenge to their hegemony, often by attempting to weaken and divide the Global South. This dynamic should not be underestimated. Narratives from the Global North frequently question the very concept of the Global South, and threats of tariffs from the United States underscore the potential of the Global South to reshape the global power order.

Therefore, the economic agenda of the Global South must necessarily include efforts to dismantle the unequal economic and political relations that define the current global order. Furthermore, a key priority should be to foster closer trade and other economic relations among Global South countries. Ultimately, at the core of this economic agenda must be an inclusive and transformative development strategy that places ordinary people at its heart.

2.5.2 Why Can't We Build Capacity? Postcolonial Legacies and the Reconstruction of Knowledge Systems

• Speaker: Hu De

• Year: 2024

I'd like to thank everyone else. This has been a fantastic event, and I'm honored to have participated in this panel discussion and learned so much here. I found all the panel discussions truly excellent. I'm particularly interested in the issue of state capacity. So like everyone else, I believe this is a very important topic.

This has been an exceptionally insightful panel, leaving me with much to ponder. I believe the audience feels the same. So for me, I almost feel like I'm just repeating what others have said. Regarding the issue of state capacity, my perspective or thoughts have recently been tied to Hong Kong, given the protests and other changes since 2019 and 2020. From the standpoint of postcolonial studies, global studies, and the humanities, it's difficult for me to comprehend the so-called political underdevelopment stemming from imperialism and colonialism.

This isn't merely economic underdevelopment, though that clearly exists too. Political underdevelopment manifests in multiple ways, undermining state capacity from within and eroding the ability to accomplish tasks toward achieving objectives. During the pandemic, I was shocked by how inadequate the capacity of many governments worldwide proved to be. I believe the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region performed better than other nations. Yet ultimately, the legacy of this British colonial governance model exposed its limitations. It genuinely lacked the capacity to manage such a situation and consequently suffered negative repercussions.

One thing happening in Hong Kong now is a growing emphasis on developing government capacity and learning how to do so. Hong Kong has always been a capitalist free-market society, and that hasn't changed. I'm not sure if everyone wants it to change, but I believe not everyone does. Yet reform is on the agenda, shifting from a purely market-driven system to one where government and market work together. We are making progress.

One point mentioned yesterday is that state capacity relates to infrastructure development. It involves either leading the market, funding it, or facilitating it through trade or other means. This is very clear and important. But if this is our sole understanding of the state, we risk becoming technocrats. What we need is qualitative workforce development. We've been discussing this in our panel, and I dislike the term "human capital." "Workforce development" is a better term. The

word "development" truly means a life of dignity, developing people's own capabilities to do things well.

China's cooperation with Africa or the Global South should not be, and is not, solely about profit. You can do it for other reasons that are equally beneficial and, to some extent, consistent with China's governance model. As far as I understand, China is not only willing to take risks but also willing to accept mistakes and losses. You can factor this into governance models and planning, then go back and try to solve problems and so on. I think this is extremely important.

A recurring theme across all panel discussions has been the emphasis on education, which I wholeheartedly endorse. This is also part of workforce or human capital development, as capacity is indispensable. I particularly appreciate the Russian translation of this concept. While the term "capacity" implies strength, the English word "potential" better captures its essence and aligns more closely with education.

Our panel also began discussing education, where we mentioned the need for a skills revolution. We must prioritize education in primary and secondary schools. At the university level, this extends beyond academic research to encompass the effective application of skills—technical skills, hard skills, mathematical skills, and so forth. I'd also like to mention emotional intelligence education, as innovation often springs from this—and innovation is the driving force behind everything. So this fundamentally relates to basic educational standards. However, I believe the education we need must also encompass what is sometimes termed "moral education." I dislike that phrase—it sounds rigid, outdated, or overly religious. But broadly speaking, moral education, humanities education, or education that cultivates emotional intelligence is truly vital when considering how to build human connections in Global South nations or anywhere. Such connections and communication occur more frequently. While language skills are certainly required, it also relates to an individual's sensitivity—to some extent, emotional intelligence—and the ability to accomplish things.

I believe broader political issues are also involved here. So questions of fairness are vital. This must be addressed through education. We need a political framework within the global South left that centers diversity and equity. I imagine everyone here would agree. This also ties into yesterday's panel discussion, where Professor Tari and her Iranian colleague spoke about non-Western knowledge, non-universal knowledge. Exactly. How do we understand these forms of knowledge? We cannot treat them essentialistically, saying they are non-Western knowledge and therefore simply knowledge. Nor can we essentialize them as Chinese knowledge, entirely distinct from other forms.

That's not the point. Knowledge can be connected to the specific place and context in which you find yourself. Another perspective is that conventional knowledge models invariably replicate a certain liberal discourse—or universalist discourse—that is normative, dominant, and ultimately flawed. So, the education Russia received in 1991 was flawed. Everything changed. I believe education must resist this tendency.

One final question, which I'll leave as such if time is short. Professor Rahman, your remarks were truly excellent—I greatly appreciated them. Why are we incapable of building capacity? That is an excellent question. I think the issue you raise is crucial. Your paper is also important. For the entire conference and for those concerned with broader development issues, this question is vital: Why are we incapable of building capacity? It is not merely a matter of money. Money certainly helps, but more important is a nation's capacity to make laws or enforce them. But I believe it goes beyond that.

I certainly don't have the answer, so I'll stop here. Thank you very much.

2.5.3 The Fundamental Paradox of Capacity Building: When the Talent We Cultivate Keeps Leaving

• Speaker: Taimur Rahman

• Year: 2024

Although the term “capacity building” has become a ubiquitous buzzword among academics and activists, the concept itself may be considered as ancient as civilization. Civilizations have always thrived and progressed on the foundation of their intellectual capacity. Metrics such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), GDP per capita, growth rates, economic performance, institutional strength, or social capital are merely reflections of a society's ability to expand its intellectual horizons and collaboratively engage in purposeful work. The global development industry, funded by the Global North, spends trillions organizing capacity-building workshops in every nook and cranny of the developing world, and there are many such workshops happening in Pakistan all the time. Yet, with some exceptions, including our host country China, the capacity to build capacity seems to be beyond our reach.

I must confess to sharing in the boundless, perhaps even reckless, enthusiasm that drives so many in the Global South to dedicate themselves to education with the hope of fostering capacity building. More than a quarter-century ago, I also chose to become a university professor, flattering myself by aspiring to be a Socratic gadfly that could perhaps inspire a generation of Pakistanis to change the destiny of our society. Sadly, that enthusiasm and optimism proved to be misplaced as, over the years, I witnessed with dismay the Global South and my beloved Pakistan fall further behind in the relentless race we call progress. While there are some notable exceptions, particularly the People's Republic of China and Vietnam, the relative gap between the North and the South is not closing but growing.

Reflecting on this journey, I wish to share some observations about what I perceive as the greatest impediments to development in the Global South, based primarily on my experience in Pakistan. My purpose is to share what I have observed, and perhaps it is applicable to other countries. Marx once explained that labor power follows where capital flows, and capital, driven solely by the imperative of profit maximization, cares little for nations, the poor, or the dispossessed. It is indifferent even to the destruction of the very people and the ecosystem that enables its existence. As Lenin further elucidated, capital, while nestling everywhere, is not exported equally, and this uneven export exacerbates disparities not only between the North and the South but also within the Global South. The relentless pursuit of “life, liberty, and happiness” often disarticulates and destabilizes the societies it touches.

The experience of Pakistan demonstrates as much. Every year, one million Pakistanis leave the country to work abroad, and successive governments proudly highlight these increasing numbers. These workers now remit as much money to Pakistan as the nation earns through all of its merchandise exports. In the fiscal year 2023, Pakistan's remittances totaled 30.3 billion US Dollars (USD), while its merchandise exports for the same year totaled \$30.6 billion. In the last 70 years, we have gone from being a cotton-exporting economy to becoming a labor power-exporting, remittance economy. Beyond the foreign exchange earnings, consider this from the perspective of capacity: every year, Pakistan sends abroad one million of its young, healthy, skilled, and educated workers—from doctors and engineers to construction workers and mechanics. The importing country can handpick the best and the brightest that Pakistan has to offer. How can a society hope to develop when it continually loses its most productive individuals?

This dynamic is reminiscent of one of the great problems in the development of Africa over the last 400 years: the continual loss of young, productive workers owing to the Atlantic slave trade. How could Africa have grown under the circumstances of losing its best and brightest? It is the same today in capitalism, except we do not call it the slave trade. This dynamic reveals the grim reality of the international division of labor, in which countries like Pakistan have been relegated to suppliers of labor power. Pakistan has become one more working-class district of global capitalism. Just as the bourgeoisie has built gated communities to exclude unwanted working people, the corridors of capitalism have gated the economies and exported unemployment, poverty, and misery into the Global South under the guise of restructuring our economies and ensuring macroeconomic stability. Capacity is being built in the developing world, but only to be exported to the developed world. We are pouring sherbet—an Arabic word also used in Hindi and Urdu—from the top, but the vessel is leaking. How can capacity be built in these circumstances?

While I am completely in favor of the goals of capacity building—skill development, resource provision, institutional strengthening, and community empowerment—I only ask whether losing a million of our best and brightest at the prime of their youth is the best development strategy for Pakistan. I acknowledge without reservation that were these people to remain in Pakistan, they would not be as gainfully employed as they are by moving to where there is a concentration of capital. But that, of course, is a product of the current class structure of Pakistan as it relates to the international political economy. From a macroeconomic and social perspective, it raises further questions: Why are countries like Pakistan unable to utilize the already present skills of their workforce to grow the economy? Is it merely the destiny of our countries to become proletarian farms for the developed world?

What did China do that was so different from Pakistan? After all, it is a fact that at one time, labor from China built the transcontinental railways of the United States, Canada, and Peru. How, then, did China come out of its "century of humiliation" to be able to retain its best and brightest to build its own society? Only the answer to that question can lead us to the solution to Pakistan's challenge of utilizing its own best and brightest for the betterment and development of our society.

2.5.4 Rebuilding the Load Capacity of the "One-Ton Truck": A Systemic Approach to Capacity Building in the Global South

• Speaker: Busani Ngcaweni

• Year: 2024

In my view, a revolution requires a very strong defense system, encompassing strong leadership as a vanguard force and a capable, competent bureaucracy. Since the triumph of the Washington Consensus (an economic policy framework that advocates for free markets, deregulation, and privatization), there has been a major reversal of attempts to build dynamic capabilities. This period saw the emergence of what Mariana Mazzucato calls "the beacon," referring to large consulting firms. A deliberate effort was made to diminish the work of government, especially in the Global South, promoting the idea of a "small government" and "weaker states," with governmental functions outsourced to these consulting firms.

Mazzucato's work painstakingly demonstrates how this approach has weakened governments and states in the Global South, significantly impacting development outcomes. These consulting firms often lacked the actual capability for major development programs, effectively infantilizing the state by reducing its role to merely issuing contracts and tenders. Nations need to learn from each other to strengthen and build their own capabilities, as highlighted by the work of Oakbay and others. The significance of institutions in driving societal growth is also underscored by Tung and other scholars.

This discussion can be contextualized within China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its alignment with the aspirations of Agenda 2063 (the African Union's strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent). It is crucial to demonstrate why building dynamic capabilities is essential by examining the synergies between the BRI and Agenda 2063, as both share the overarching idea of building a community with a shared future for humankind. A closer reading reveals that the aspirations are fundamentally the same. The objectives of Agenda 2063, such as fostering well-educated citizens, driving a skills revolution underpinned by science and technology, and developing world-class infrastructure, coincide with the fundamental ingredients for the BRI's success. Transformative institutions and leadership, along with the engagement of youth, are also critical for achieving these objectives. These goals would be impossible to realize without building dynamic state capabilities that can drive a coherent national and regional development agenda.

In the Global South, the state and state institutions have been hollowed out due to outsourcing. This erosion of capabilities has resulted in politicians primarily engaging in ceremonial activities, such as cutting ribbons, kissing babies, and traveling to Beijing or Washington, lacking deeper capabilities beyond these functions. In the West, these politicians are often wined and dined by vested interests, which further erodes their intellectual capacity to make meaningful decisions.

An example illustrates the consequences of lacking dynamic capabilities. Early Belt and Road Initiative projects in Uganda and Kenya reportedly had very weak terms and conditions in their contracts. This was largely attributed to a rush by leaders to sign contracts due to looming elections, prioritizing the visible launch of projects over a thorough study of contract details. Consequently, some of these early projects became targets of criticism from the Global North. This underscores the importance of rebuilding dynamic capabilities at both the political and bureaucratic levels; failure to do so would weaken the ability to transform societies.

Therefore, it is imperative to embark on a massive investment in reskilling bureaucracies in the Global South, beginning with leadership. China serves as an example where the quality of leadership directly correlates with development outcomes. The proposal is to replicate this in the Global South, building the capacity of leadership to govern economies effectively, rather than outsourcing this crucial function to external agencies. Leaders must possess a nuanced understanding of economic data and recognize that development is an outcome of quality decisions. Poor decisions, even with abundant resources, will not yield the desired benefits. Leaders must understand that development necessitates investment in the economy, and that investment is not a function of prayer, as seen in some countries where leaders spend more time convening people in stadiums for prayer than in boardrooms to model growth. This matters significantly because those in leadership positions make the strategic choices that countries will pursue.

It is also essential to rebuild institutions in the Global South. In many cases, these institutions have been weakened and hollowed out due to their dependence on large consulting firms, as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, institutions have become a major frontier for capture and corruption in many Global South countries. Therefore, this project of investing in rebuilding dynamic institutions is vital, whether these institutions are responsible for effective tax collection, regulating construction, or leading and managing higher education and skills development. This represents a very important and necessary commitment.

Crucially, as observed in China and many other Asian countries, there must be a massive investment in building bureaucracies, as bureaucracies in some Global South countries are dysfunctional. This leads to officials making arbitrary decisions, lacking accountability, being susceptible to corruption, and delaying or making poor decisions. It has been argued that within BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) in particular, objectives will not be met without investing in bureaucracies that understand each other's systems, including trading systems and customs. Therefore, a clear agenda is needed to cultivate competent bureaucrats in Brazil, Iran, South Africa, Ethiopia, Egypt, and elsewhere, as these competent professionals execute the mandates of leadership. This necessitates building a system of meritocracy to select the most capable individuals, rather than choosing the least effective options. Bureaucrats should be viewed as pilots who constantly return to a simulator to calibrate and recalibrate their abilities to understand the global system and value chains, make quality decisions, and, most importantly, interpret and implement the decisions of leadership.

The youth represent a very important productive force in many Global South countries, yet they are often left behind. Insufficient capabilities prevent them from fully engaging in their countries' economies. This often results in protests and changes in leadership due to poor quality education, inadequate outcomes, and limited access to services. For young women in particular, poor health outcomes are a significant concern. Therefore, for the success of the Global South project, it is crucial to invest massively in the reskilling of young people.

Finally, a significant mistake being made is the exclusion of civil society, including scholars and media, from these engagements. The belief that the Global South project will succeed solely because leaders have decided and agreed upon it, or because public servants can execute mandates, is flawed. Civil society and non-state actors must not be left behind; they are crucial for becoming a protective or defense force for the ongoing revolution. This includes engaging with the media differently, ensuring that media houses do not merely emulate those in Washington or London, where even journalists face discontent. Creative approaches are needed to build networks and bonds of progressive civil society that can tell the real story. Otherwise, the Global South will be overwhelmed by headlines that misrepresent outcomes. It is therefore essential to build a very strong, well-informed civil society that understands the intentions of the Global South agenda.

To illustrate what it means to build state capacity in the Global South, consider the analogy of a one-ton truck carrying a hundred-ton load. The global project cannot be abandoned simply because the Global South lacks the analytical capacity of organizations like the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD) or the resources of large consulting firms. Instead, if this agenda is driven by the Global South, which currently operates like a one-ton truck carrying a hundred-ton load, there must be an active focus on the science of building its own capacity to bear that load. This may involve replacing "retread tires" (incompetent leaders), which are dangerous when carrying heavy loads, and potentially adjusting the speed of operations. Mutual learning is also vital to avoid repeating mistakes or wasting resources on problems already solved by others. The fundamental definition of a developmental state lies in its ability to balance its strength and capacity with the scope of its ambitions. Without reskilling, institutions and leaders can be overwhelmed by assumptions of capability when they are, in fact, like a one-ton truck carrying a hundred-ton load.

Therefore, through reskilling, the Global South can recalibrate, build strength, reinforce its operational engine, and develop new "shock absorbers" to prevent the entire project from collapsing. In short, for the success of the Global South project, there must be investment in reskilling various cadres within society, particularly those within the state, while also actively engaging civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and young people.

Part III The 80th Anniversary of the Anti-Fascist War

3.1 The Power of the People and the Contemporary Forms of Fascism

3.1.1 Two Lies and One Great Truth

• Speaker: Vijay Prashad

• Year: 2025

In early August 1942, the Soviets set up loudspeakers across Leningrad. The city had been under siege for over 300 days. People were starving. The conductor, Karl Eliasberg, kept the Leningrad Radio Orchestra going by holding rehearsals and personally taking his musicians to feeding stations. On 9 August, Eliasberg collected the 15 survivors of the Leningrad Radio Orchestra and brought in some members of the military bands to the Bolshoi Philharmonic Hall. They performed Dmitri Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 7* (the Leningrad Symphony) over the radio and through the public loudspeakers.

The symphony is made up of four movements. The first, calm and almost pastoral, evokes Leningrad before the war. The second, built around a snare drum ostinato that grows steadily louder, alludes to the Nazi invasion. The third, led by strings and wind instruments, laments the terrible suffering of the Soviet people, millions already dead or dying. The final movement, in C major, loud and proud, anticipates victory against the evils of fascism. They did not know it yet, but they were less than halfway through the siege. They had 536 more days of starvation and battle ahead of them. It says something about the sheer grit of the Soviet citizenry that they would perform the symphony amid the siege, loudspeakers pointed at the Nazi lines so that the Germans could hear it too. In the Soviet archive, there is a sentence written by an intelligence officer: 'Even the enemy listened in silence. They knew it was our victory over despair'. Later, a German prisoner said that the symphony was 'a ghost from the city we could not kill'.

Our study shows that the Soviet Red Army destroyed 80% of the Wehrmacht in their miraculous rush across Eastern Europe. By the time the Western armies came near the borders of Germany, the Nazi regime had already collapsed. It was the Soviet Red Army that liberated most of the people in concentration camps, and it was the scientific manner of their advance that forced the Nazi allies in Eastern Europe – such as the Romanians – to surrender and change sides. The reason the Soviet Union was able to marshal all its strength against the Nazis is because the Chinese Communists and patriots defended the Soviet Union's eastern flank against

attacks by the Japanese militarists. Fighting with inadequate arms, the Chinese Communists and patriots nonetheless inflicted enormous damage on the Japanese, tying down 60% of their army and preventing it from facing the onrush of US troops that went from island to island in the Pacific.

If the Chinese had not tied down the Japanese troops, the Soviet Union would have fallen (and Nazi Germany would have seized Europe) and US troops might not have prevailed in the battles of Saipan (1944) and Iwo Jima (1945). The Soviet Red Army and the Chinese Communists and patriots together sacrificed tens of millions of lives to defeat fascism (the precise calculation is laid out in our study, ranging from 50 million to 100 million). By May 1945, when the Nazi regime collapsed, it was already clear that Japanese militarism was on a path towards surrender. It was unnecessary for the United States to conduct the Trinity tests in July 1945 and drop atom bombs on Hiroshima (6 August) and Nagasaki (9 August). The immense sacrifice of the Soviet citizens and the Chinese Communists and patriots made the use of that weapon of mass destruction preventable; that the United States used it tells us more about imperialism's violent disregard for human life, which is exactly what we are seeing today in .

The first lie. The Western Allies opposed the fascists from the onset and won the war against fascism.

The truth. The Western governments sent their armies to destroy the October Revolution from the moment it began in 1917. The Soviet government sued for peace in December 1917, but Germany nonetheless attacked Finland and the young Soviet republic, which led to a massive allied invasion (with troops descending from the United States, United Kingdom, France, Romania, Estonia, Greece, Australia, Canada, Japan, and Italy). The attitude of the Allies is clear from the writings and speeches of British politician Winston Churchill, who in 1919 said that the Allies should destroy 'the foul baboonery of Bolshevism' (30 years later he said that 'the strangling of Bolshevism at its birth would have been an untold blessing to the human race'). In the 1930s and 1940s, the Western governments wanted the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy to turn their guns against the Soviet Union and destroy it. That was what 'appeasement' meant – that they agreed with Adolf Hitler's anti-communism and allowed his military build-up as long as it focused on the Soviet Union. Although Britain and France declared war on Germany in September 1939, they did nothing in the months that followed – a period known as the Phoney War, the *Drôle de guerre*, or the *Sitzkrieg* (a play on *Blitzkrieg*, or lightning war).

In 1941, Hitler's armies invaded the Soviet Union. At the Tehran Conference of 1943, the United States and United Kingdom had to acknowledge that it was the Red Army

that was destroying fascism. Churchill, on behalf of King George VI, gave Soviet leader Joseph Stalin a sword made of Sheffield steel called the 'Sword of Stalingrad' to commemorate the courage of the Soviet citizens who withstood the siege (where two million were killed) and beat the Nazis. But it took the Allies another year before they entered the war in Europe in 1944. By this time, the German military had been decimated by the Red Army (and by Allied aerial bombardment). The Western countries entered the war because they feared that the Red Army would charge into Germany and hold a position in the heart of Europe.

For the Western governments, the principal contradiction was not between liberalism and fascism: it was between the imperialist (or war) camp – which included both the fascists and the liberals – and the socialist (or peace) camp. This contradiction ran from 1917 to 1991 right through the years of the Second World War – the World Anti-Fascist War.

The second lie. It was the US sacrifices in the Pacific war and the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that defeated Japanese militarism.

The truth. The World Anti-Fascist War did not begin when Germany invaded Austria in 1939. It began two years earlier in China, at the time of the Marco Polo Bridge incident (the July 1937 clash near Beijing that marked the start of Japan's full-scale invasion of China) and continued right through the US war against Korea, which did not come to a close until the armistice of 1953. Millions of brave patriotic and anti-fascist people fought against Japanese militarism, which drew in the worst of the far right in Korea and Indochina. By the time the United States entered the war in December 1941, the Chinese patriots and Communists – as well as the national liberation armies in Indochina and Southeast Asia – tied down 60% of Japanese troops, rendering them unable to attack the eastern flank of the Soviets. The immense sacrifices of the Hundred Regiments Offensive in 1940, where General Zhu De led 400,000 Communist troops to destroy Japanese infrastructure in northern China (including 900 kilometers of railroad line), should not be forgotten.

The mythography of the US marine clambering up onto the heights of Iwo Jima or the atom bomb cowering the Japanese into surrender is pervasive. Yet it erases the fact that the Japanese had already been substantially beaten, that they were prepared to surrender, and that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not military targets. What happened in August 1945 was not about military strategy: it was entirely a demonstration of US power, a message to the world about the new weapon that the US had developed and a warning to the communists in Asia that this weapon could be used against them. The millions of Asian workers and peasants that died to defeat fascism – including my family members in Burma – were erased by the mushroom

cloud. It began to take precedence in popular memory. The bomb, not the people who fought for each inch of land across southeast Asia, became the hero. That is the second lie.

The enormous truth. Amid these two lies is an enormous truth that has been buried in our popular memory: fascism is the negation of sovereignty and dignity, the ugly twin of colonialism. It is hard to distinguish between the two. After all, genocide was a constitutive feature of colonial rule (consider the six million people killed in the Congo, the genocide of the Herero and Nama peoples of South West Africa by Germany, the genocide of the native peoples of the Americas, and the three million Bengalis starved to death in 1943).

After the defeat of German fascism and Japanese militarism, the Dutch, French, and British, with their US allies, returned to claim their colonies in Indonesia, Indochina, and Malaya. The violence of these colonial wars in the 1940s and 1950s is grotesque. Of the Dutch attempt to recolonize Indonesia, the nationalist leader Sukarno said, 'They call it *police action*, but our villages burn, our people die, and our nation bleeds for its freedom'. Chin Peng, a Malayan communist, said something similar: 'We rose up because we saw villages starve, voices silenced by money and power'. General Sir Gerald Templer, who ran the British Emergency in Malaya, said after a rebellion that it was a 'village of five thousand cowards' and starved the villagers by denying them rice.

Villages burned. Villagers starved. That was the reality of the attempted reconquest of the colonies and then of the US war on Korea. When the US began its operations in Korea, President Harry Truman said that his army should use 'every weapon that we have' – a chilling comment given the use of nuclear weapons on Japan. But there was no need for an atom bomb, since aerial bombardment vanished the cities of northern Korea. As Major General Emmett O'Donnell told the US Senate in 1951, 'Everything is destroyed. There is nothing standing worthy of the name. There were no more targets in Korea'. This was their attitude: fascism or colonialism – take your pick.

The Western colonialists resurrected fascistic elements in Japan, Korea, Indochina, and other countries and allied with them to strengthen an international axis against workers, peasants, and communists. This reveals that the Western colonialists were not anti-fascist at all. Their real enemy was the possibility that workers and peasants would build clarity and confidence and opt for a socialist future.

The enormous truth is that it was the Soviet Red Army and the Chinese Communists and patriots that *actually* defeated Nazi Germany and militarist Japan. It was these forces that sacrificed the most against fascism and understood the intimate

relationship between fascism, capitalism, and colonialism. One cannot be an anti-fascist and be for colonialism or capitalism. That is simply impossible. These are antithetical formations.

My mind is still in Leningrad in August 1942. Remember the orchestra and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 7*. The Nazi troops surround the city. Everything is silent. Then the music begins. It continues for an hour. And then, the music stops.

3.1.2 People's War as a Political Concept

• Speaker: Wang Hui

• Year: 2025

I wish to analyze the concept of "people's war" primarily from the perspective of warfare, particularly the wars of 20th-century China. Earlier this morning, Dean Li Shenming also mentioned the notions of "the people above all," the concept of "the people," and the category of war. These held special significance in the 20th century and also touch upon divergences in historical understanding.

The first issue is to examine the position of the Chinese people's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the global anti-fascist war within 20th-century history over a longer timeframe. Chronologically, the two world wars were massive in scale, technologically advanced, and resulted in unprecedented casualties. However, the imperialist nature of World War I makes it difficult to truly distinguish it from many 19th-century wars. As discussed, this morning, colonialism and fascism share a twin-like relationship.

From the perspective of China's revolution, the timeline begins with the Opium War of 1840, followed by the two Opium Wars waged by the Anglo-French allied forces, the Sino-French War, the First Sino-Japanese War, the Boxer Rebellion, the Russo-Japanese War, the September 18th Incident and Japan's occupation of Northeast China, culminating in the full-scale invasion of China triggered by the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. Following 1945, U.S. intervention in the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, the U.S. blockade of the Taiwan Strait in 1950, and the Vietnam War from 1955 to 1975—these events collectively form a prolonged, continuous process: the imperialist aggression, interference, and occupation of oppressed nations and peoples like China, Korea, and Vietnam.

Crucially, imperialist military expansion was not only driven by economic plunder but also precipitated a transformation in China's economic structure. It not only gave rise to a comprador system and bureaucratic capital compatible with colonial economics, but also produced more significant economic and political forces resisting imperialism. These included the national industries and national bourgeoisie mentioned by Mao Zedong and numerous modern historical works, particularly the Chinese proletariat working in enterprises directly operated by imperialists, as well as in bureaucratic capitalist and national bourgeois enterprises. To sustain its aggression, imperialism exploited Chinese peasants through unequal exchange, bankrupting them and creating hundreds of millions of impoverished peasants—who constituted 70% of the rural population. Imperialism also forged

millions of new-style intellectuals distinct from traditional literati or scholar-officials. These groups became crucial pillars of resistance against Japanese imperialism during World War II, particularly in China's War of Resistance Against Japan.

When discussing the category of "the people," it is crucial to recognize that "the people" are not merely the general population but a nascent force that evolves historically. Precisely for this reason, China's War of Resistance Against Japan and World War II encompassed content distinct from that of World War I. The First World War and The Second World War differ in this respect, for only during the Second World War—specifically within China's War of Resistance Against Japan—did revolutionary, national liberation, and anti-fascist united front resistance emerge as integral components of the war effort, elements absent from the First World War. Thus, in an era defined by war and revolution, the most crucial question when examining the Second World War concerns the relationship between war and revolution. To understand 20th-century China's transformations through war itself, one must examine the distinctive characteristics of China's warfare during this period.

The Northern Expedition, the Land Revolution War, the War of Resistance Against Japan, and the Liberation War all differed significantly from earlier conflicts like the Opium Wars, the Sino-French War, and the First Sino-Japanese War. The core distinction lies in the fact that the former were wars that organized revolution within the framework of war mobilization. Without acknowledging the dual relationship between 20th-century warfare and its twin revolution, it is difficult to comprehend and discuss the wars of this era. The victory we now attribute to the anti-fascist war was fundamentally grounded in wars that advanced revolution through warfare. These conflicts were not merely about resisting foreign aggression but simultaneously driving social revolution. They were not wars to establish ordinary, traditional states, but rather wars to forge revolutionary states through revolutionary warfare—wars that created new popular subjects. Throughout this process, a new popular subject emerged, uniting the national liberation war with the international anti-fascist struggle.

Therefore, while we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the victory in the War Against Fascism and the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, placing them within the same historical framework, we can still discern distinct historical forces at work within this shared history. This was a war that achieved national liberation through domestic revolutionary struggle while resonating with the international socialist movement. Precisely for this reason, the wars that occurred after the founding of the People's

Republic of China—such as the Korean War and the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea—were not traditional defense wars in the conventional sense, though they certainly held significant national defense implications. Rather, they were wars of international alliance grounded in the historical foundations of the 20th-century revolutionary alliance and the anti-fascist alliance—or, to put it another way, they were wars of international alliance within that historical context. It is against this backdrop that we must pose our questions. The new China formed along this trajectory may exhibit distinct characteristics in its categories of nation, ethnicity, sovereignty, political party, people, and class, as well as in its state form, compared to its predecessors. From the Soviets formed in the early 1930s to the later birth of the People's Republic of China, how did organization and mobilization transform peasants into a vital revolutionary force or a political class? How should we understand sovereignty, sovereignty disputes, and Third World solidarity within the context of international alliances and wars—even broader movements like the Bandung Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement that emerged under new global hegemonic structures? These conditions differed from earlier wars yet remained interconnected.

On one hand, wars from the Opium Wars to 20th-century imperialist conflicts exhibit strong continuity. On the other, the warfare patterns of the 20th century—particularly during World War II, or even earlier from the Northern Expedition onward—differed fundamentally from their predecessors. The core distinction lies in this being a war that integrated revolution and warfare. I consider this the first point. It was precisely on this foundation that the uniquely Chinese concept of "People's War" emerged.

The fundamental conditions for people's war, I believe, carry dual significance. First, as we discuss the anti-fascist war and China's fourteen-year history of resistance against Japanese aggression today, a consensus has gradually emerged. Research also indicates: why did China and Russia suffer such immense sacrifices during World War II, making such a colossal contribution to the victory over fascism? This involves a duality: on one hand, victory; on the other, sacrifice. The reason for such immense sacrifice is that both the revolution and this war unfolded in relatively underdeveloped regions where capitalism was not sufficiently advanced. Within this region, two of the most significant concepts of the 20th century were proposed. The first was Lenin's concept of the "weakness". He argued that in a world order characterized by competition among multiple powers, the international system would inevitably exhibit weak links. Lenin pointed out that international capitalism was speculative in nature. Its monumental achievements had not yet matured to the point of full international cooperation, remaining hindered by capitalist groups exploiting national sentiments and policies to pursue special interests. Thus, against

the backdrop of Western powers attacking China and the Soviet Union, unique weak links emerged.

In the Soviet Union, this became the foundational analytical condition for revolution within a single nation and the establishment of a socialist state. In the Chinese Revolution, Mao Zedong analyzed the possibility emerging within Chinese society—under the framework of international capitalism—due to internal power imbalances in the cracks of. These two types of weak links—one international, one domestic—required various strategic analyses to generate genuine, viable forces. When discussing the victory in World War II—the triumph over fascism—we must consider why victory was possible despite facing a stronger enemy. This requires analyzing the history of the Chinese Revolution.

Before the outbreak of World War II, during the interwar period, the first wave of base area construction, Red Army development, and the establishment of revolutionary governments had already commenced following the failure of the Northern Expedition. Today, Professor Lu Tonglin specifically highlighted the struggles in regions like Yan'an and Jin-Cha-Ji, which were extensions of the early revolutionary base area experience. Without the early Red Army and its northward advance, this would have been impossible. In other words, it required new revolutionary governments, an organized army already under Communist leadership, and the integration of that army with social mobilization across different local regions to gain popular support. This was intertwined with unique economic, political, social, and even cultural conditions.

Thus, on one hand, analyzing imperialism's unevenness and the divisions and contradictions within its domestic ruling structures served as the premise for revolutionary politics and strategy. On the other hand, the new mobilizing forces required for the war's advancement—including the formation of the Communist Party, organized armies, guerrilla units, and the support of ordinary peasants who had undergone a degree of land revolution—all constituted the prerequisites for revolution. It was precisely under these conditions that the new political forces emerging during World War II and China's War of Resistance Against Japan took shape.

This morning, Professor Wu Enyuan mentioned the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army and the North China region. All these areas built upon the foundation of existing red zones established during the First Domestic Revolution period, accumulating experience and developing organized armies and Party organizations. Only under such conditions could the fundamental prerequisites for the subsequent

victories in the anti-fascist war and the War of Resistance Against Japan be truly established. I consider this a crucial point.

In my view, the most significant political concepts proposed by Mao Zedong in the 20th century—including his so-called "four magic weapons": armed struggle, the mass line, the united front, and Party building—can all be interpreted within the framework of "people's war." "It is in this sense that the 20th-century war was not a purely military concept but a political category encompassing diversity. Thus, under the unique conditions of 20th-century China, people's war was in fact a process of creating a new political subject, as well as a process of creating the political structures and forms of self-expression that corresponded to this political subject.

In the people's war, the representative relationship of modern political parties underwent a fundamental transformation. We all know that the Communist Party of China was indeed influenced by the Soviet Union and the Comintern in its early days. In the early 1920s, its main members were still primarily intellectuals. Through the Great Revolution, the first united front with the Kuomintang, and its integration with the peasant and workers' movements, the Party underwent a significant transformation. After the failure of the Great Revolution, when the CPC retreated to backward bases such as the Jiangxi Soviet Area, a new popular force emerged—primarily composed of peasants and politically united through an alliance of workers and peasants. This gave rise to and transformed the political landscape, including the establishment of border region governments, Soviets, political parties, peasant associations, and labor unions.

Thus, between 1925 and 1926, the Kuomintang's policy of allying with Russia and the Communist Party led to joint Kuomintang-Communist efforts in the peasant and labor movements. The Guangzhou Peasant Movement Institute, led by Mao Zedong, was a direct product of this peasant movement. The Kuomintang's primary political innovations during the Northern Expedition period centered on two points: first, breaking away from the old warlords to establish a party army; second, collaborating with the Communist Party in peasant and worker movements to complement the Northern Expedition with mass mobilization. Thus, the concept of the "party army"—armed revolution against armed counterrevolution—was not originally invented by the Communist Party but represented a shared innovation of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party during their revolutionary phase, influenced by the Comintern.

However, after 1927, the Kuomintang gradually abandoned these social movements. With the integration of party and state, the political character of the military significantly declined. Precisely against this backdrop, for the Communist Party, a

transformation of the party was unthinkable without the people's war that gradually developed after the failure of the Northern Expedition. This point is particularly crucial. Therefore, the integration of the party with the military within the people's war constitutes its first defining feature.

The second characteristic is the integration of the party with the red regime, which stands as one of the most vital political legacies of 20th-century China, retaining its vitality to this day. Through the land revolution during the People's War, the party forged ties with the peasantry as the mainstay of the masses. Simultaneously, the party's relationships with other political parties, social strata, and their political representatives underwent transformation, a shift particularly pronounced during the War of Resistance Against Japan. The Second United Front proposed during the War of Resistance not only encompassed workers and peasants but also included the petty bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie, and even those strata among the landlords and big bourgeoisie unwilling to collaborate with Japan or become traitors. All these elements could be incorporated into the united front. These experiences remind us that people's war created a type of political party fundamentally different from any in history. I have previously described this as dual-natured: on one hand, it functions as a super-party due to its highly centralized leadership; on the other, it possesses elements of a supra-party because of its close ties to mass movements and popular campaigns. Thus, I term such a party a "super-party"—one that incorporates supra-party elements, meaning a super-party closely linked to mass movements, and one that is tightly integrated with the military and the state.

Second, people's war also forged unique forms of warfare. Following the failure of the Great Revolution, early bases like those established after the Autumn Harvest Uprising and Nanchang Uprising saw land reform and armed struggle become the fundamental means for transforming party politics into mass movements. The central task of the Jinggangshan struggle thus shifted to land reform and state-building under revolutionary war conditions. The integration of the Party and the military, the Party's linkage with the peasant movement and land reform through the military, the Party and the Soviet-area governments under its leadership managing economic life, and the cultural campaigns the Party conducted among the masses—these not only altered the specific content and central tasks of the revolution but also, through the multifaceted integration of the political party, the military, the government, and the peasant movement, created an entirely new political entity. This constituted the political foundation of people's war. These political processes unfolding during the war endowed people's war with characteristics distinct from other forms of warfare. Mao Zedong stated that "soldiers and civilians are the foundation of victory," meaning the integration of the

military with the common people is the bedrock of triumph. This proposition encapsulates the general principle of people's war: only by mobilizing and relying on the masses can war be waged.

Second, it requires not only a strong regular army but also local armed forces and militia. Third, the concept of "soldiers and civilians" signifies a political process closely tied to military struggle, centered on land reform and state-building. Therefore, one of the key outcomes of people's war is the establishment of the red regime. The primary forms of the red regime were the Border Region governments and Border Region Soviets. These entities not only managed the organizational structures of daily life but also drew upon historical experiences of state governance from both China and abroad. However, this form of government differed fundamentally from the bourgeois state in the conventional sense. Through sustained political and war mobilization, it cultivated political consciousness and class consciousness, thereby organizing these processes to generate a new political form.

Under conditions of people's war, the Chinese Communist Party and the base area governments addressed not merely military issues but also the organization of daily life and ordinary laborers. This gave rise to the mass line for the Party and government. Its core tenets were: First, serving the interests of the broad masses was the starting point and ultimate goal of the Party's work; Second, the border region government serves as the organizer of people's livelihoods. Only by diligently resolving mass issues, tangibly improving people's lives, and earning their trust in the border region government can the masses be mobilized to join the Red Army, support the war effort, and defeat encirclement campaigns. Thus, people's war is not merely a method of effectively eliminating enemies through military struggle, but also involves addressing the core issues constituting people's lives—land, labor, daily necessities, women, schools, market trade, and even currency and finance.

The mutual interpenetration and transformation between military affairs and daily life became the core issue of people's war. Thus, Mao Zedong repeatedly reminded Communists that to gain the masses' support and secure their full commitment to the front lines, they must live among the people, mobilize their enthusiasm, care about their hardships, sincerely work for their interests, and resolve their production and livelihood issues—including salt, rice, housing, clothing, and childbirth. He asserted that the mass line was the fundamental strategy of people's war, the policy of the party, and the very means of reconstructing the party. On one hand, without organization, we would not know where the masses were; on the other, without the process of integrating with the masses and learning from them, the organization would lack vitality and become detached from the people.

Against this unique backdrop, the people's war also self-reconstructed new forms of political leadership and party structures. This explains why, in the wars of the 20th century, the Chinese revolution—and particularly the Communist Party—gained political supremacy despite being militarily outnumbered. This supremacy extended beyond the political sphere to encompass cultural leadership. As Mao Zedong noted in his 1940s essay "On New Democracy," two miracles defined China's revolution: first, the Communist Party's deepening of the land revolution under wartime conditions; second, the advancement of cultural revolution—where the cultural left, represented by Lu Xun, seized political leadership despite being in the minority. Lu Xun's concept of "mass literature for the national revolutionary war" embodies, in my view, the literature of people's war, mutually reinforcing this struggle.

However, World War II, particularly China's War of Resistance Against Japan, featured one most prominent aspect distinct from earlier wars: the formation of the United Front Against Japanese Aggression. From the September 18 Incident of 1931 to the Xi'an Incident of 1936, the groundwork for this united front was gradually laid. This front not only transcended the early European revolutionary model focused solely on the proletariat—placing the broad masses of workers and peasants at the core of the revolution—but also incorporated the petty bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie, and even segments of the big bourgeoisie and landlords willing to resist aggression. Together, they formed a new popular subject. The questions of leadership and the united front were two coexisting aspects.

This advocacy and practice of the united front existed not only during the War of Resistance Against Japan in the 20th century but also in the War of Liberation. We observed the criticism of the Kuomintang by various democratic parties and their gradual collaboration with the Communist Party of China. After the 1950s, with the convening of the Bandung Conference, new relationships emerged on the international level: alliances within the international anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movement, alliances with non-socialist countries, and alliances with progressive forces within imperialist nations.

As Professor Lu Tonglin mentioned earlier, elements among Japanese prisoners of war who participated in the anti-war alliance already existed during the War of Resistance Against Japan. After the war, some of them became a new political force in the peace movement and in promoting Sino-Japanese friendship. From our current discussion of the historical position of the Global South, we can draw valuable lessons and fresh inspiration from the wars, revolutions, and the strategic tactics they shaped throughout the 20th century. Based on today's conditions, we can develop new opportunities and insights for the vital cause of achieving global peace.

3.1.3 Hegemonic Governance as Contemporary Fascism

- Speaker: Busani Ngcaweni

- Year: 2025

Colleagues, comrades and thinkers in pursuit of justice, good morning.

Mainstream media prefers to have us believe that fascism ended in the twentieth century. It clings to the illusion that the fascist imagination died with the dictators who wore uniforms and medals. It comforts itself with the myth that the age of goose steps and concentration camps has passed into history.

Yet the theme of this conference calls us to look beneath contemporary global governance and examine the nature of power in transition. It invites us to ask what becomes of humanity when global order is confused with global obedience. It directs us to explore the moral foundations of domination that remain unchanged despite the emergence of new vocabularies.

Fascism did not vanish. It refined itself. It removed its militaristic costume and adopted new languages and institutions. Its imperial ambitions survived, hidden beneath the fabrics of civility and coated in the rhetoric of progress and development.

What we confront today is not the afterlife of fascism but its metamorphosis. It is fascism without spectacle, clothed in diplomacy, policy and market orthodoxy. It calls itself good governance and international order. It hides behind rating agencies, consulting firms and think tanks. It speaks of stability yet cultivates instability for profit. We all know what has happened in Lybia. It builds consensus by saturating the world with the idea that there is no alternative to Western universalism.

It no longer shouts. It administers. It no longer burns books. It shapes algorithms and commits epistemic violence. It no longer stages parades. It stages wars of humanitarian necessity. It wages violence through law, bureaucracy and debt. In this form, it appears rational, even inevitable and therefore more dangerous than its earlier expression.

This logic extends into culture, now aided by large language models. As colonial officials once codified African culture and languages to proletarianise and discipline communities, so too do the platforms of Silicon Valley flatten our speech into big data points. They claim neutrality yet carry the same impulse to command meaning. I have argued before that these digital tools rewrite our idioms into monotones and

turn flames into ashes. They repeat, in a more sophisticated form, the colonial act of stripping languages of their sovereignty.

This is the fascism of our age: hegemonic statecraft.

Classical fascism was visible. We saw it in Germany, Italy, Chile, Japan and South Africa. It worshipped the state as destiny. It demanded purity and submission. It glorified force and obedience. It punished dissent and crushed the vulnerable. If we borrow from Ray Charles, it kicked the man who had to crawl. Heaven help us all.

Hegemonic statecraft looks polite. It hosts summits and speaks of democracy and development. Yet beneath the polite texture lies the same metaphysical impulse: the desire to dominate, regulate and reorder the world in the Euro-American image.

Since the end of the Second World War, the global order has been structured around the jaundiced morality of the few. Western powers used the language of liberalism to discipline others and the architecture of multilateralism to preserve asymmetry—their statecraft functions as domination rather than solidarity.

It enforces influence through sanctions, debt, aid, media and military intervention. It controls knowledge through patents and propaganda. It celebrates open markets while kicking away the developmental ladder for the South.

This tradition has deep roots in imperial classification systems. As the Latin American decolonial scholar Ramon Grosfoguel writes:

"We moved from the sixteenth-century characterization of people without writing, to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century labelling of people without history, to the twentieth-century invention of people without development, and now to the early twenty-first-century narrative of people without democracy."

We are always without, needing meaning from others.

This is the long grammar of dismembering. It strips whole societies of voice and legitimacy so that domination can appear as upliftment.

Hegemonic statecraft governs through manufactured consent. It convinces the oppressed to internalize their oppression. It teaches them that poverty is self-inflicted by them when they choose bad leaders, that inequality is natural, and that resistance is irrational. In doing so, it empties the imagination of alternatives.

Its brilliance lies in its invisibility.

Fascism is not only political violence. It is metaphysical violence. It worships a false universality while rejecting a shared humanity. It draws borders on maps and also in minds. It ranks people by degrees of being. It names itself civilization and names others a threat.

Colonialism, apartheid, Zionism and fascism belong to one genealogy. They are methods of world-making through erasure. They manufacture emptiness to justify occupation. They rename destroyed landscapes as proof that nothing existed before.

The global order governed by hegemonic statecraft continues this lineage. It renames domination as humanitarian intervention, innovation or modernization. It treats sovereignty as a privilege rather than a right. It measures worth in currency instead of dignity. It divides humanity into capable and incapable, civilized and fragile.

Its invasions are labelled peacekeeping. Its extraction is called partnership. Its destruction is narrated as reform.

It cannot coexist with plurality. It tolerates differences only when differences are obedient. It dismembers nations and reconstructs them as protectorates or markets. It intervenes not to end suffering but to secure alignment. It rebuilds not to restore peace but to create dependency.

Today, the world is at war, often in an invisible manner. Sanctions starve more effectively than bombs. Debt destroys more thoroughly than fire. Data surveillance penetrates more deeply than armies. Trade barriers suffocate small economies. The moral violence of fascism has become routine and administrative. It is the DNA of modern capitalism.

Ladies and gentlemen, one cannot talk about fascism without referring to the atrocities being committed against the people of Palestine.

To speak of Palestine is to talk about the language of global power. Palestine is not only a theatre of occupation. It is the archetype of dismemberment.

To dismember a people is to sever them from the symbolic order that affirms their existence. It is to deny them the right to name themselves, remember themselves and imagine themselves. Israel's project rests upon this metaphysical violence. It seeks not only to occupy geography but to erase ontology.

It claims there are no Palestinians, only inhabitants. It treats memory as an inconvenience. To erase the name is to erase the possibility of the future.

Dismembering operates territorially through fragmented land, historically through claims of non-existence and epistemically through controlled narratives that rename occupation as conflict.

Palestine reveals something else that is vital for our analysis. It shows how the powerful monopolize the language of morality itself. They define violence by who performs it, not by who suffers from it. They define terror by who names it, not by who endures it. In this way, imperialism controls not only borders but also the meaning of justice. Palestine is the mirror in which the Global South recognizes the structure of its own dispossession. It is the place where the world learns how far a system will go to preserve its racialized order. Which is why President Nelson Mandela said, South Africa's freedom was incomplete without the liberation of Palestine.

Fascism is not dead. It has become efficient. It manufactures consent. It convinces people that inequality is natural and that poverty is a deserved consequence for choosing wrong leaders. It worships the market as the god of order. The body is not imprisoned. It is indebted. The mind is not censored. It is distracted. Information circulates, yet meaning is monopolized.

Beyond the Middle East, fascism today is digital. Its concentration camps are invisible. Its violence is inscribed in code and contract. In the linguistic sphere, it strips African languages of their elasticity. It rewrites them for foreign ears. It polices what it claims to correct. This is the newest frontier of epistemicide. It is colonialism translated into an algorithm.

Hegemonic statecraft disciplines nations through ratings, debt, sanctions and structural reforms. It enforces dependency under the banner of globalization. Domination appears as cooperation, and inequality as efficiency. This is the perfection of 21 century fascism: control without invasion and erasure without noise.

If hegemonic statecraft dis-members, developmental statecraft re-members through solidarity.

At Bandung Conference in 1955, the leaders of Asia and Africa declared that nations have the right to develop in their own way. Bandung was not simply a meeting. It was a moral proclamation. It affirmed that freedom is not charity and that civilization is not Western property.

Solidarity is not sentiment. It is structured. It affirms that no nation can be free while another is colonized and no humanity can be whole while any of its limbs remain severed.

Today, echoes of Bandung are visible in the Global South's initiatives, such as China's Global Development Initiative, which promotes shared prosperity. The Global Security Initiative emphasizes the principle of indivisible security. The Global Civilization Initiative celebrates cultural plurality. The Global Governance Initiative calls for institutions that reflect fairness rather than force.

These initiatives, whose foundations are the outcome of Bandung Conference, reject unipolar arrogance. They sketch a moral geography first drawn at Bandung. This is developmental statecraft in action.

Developmental statecraft is not a policy model. It is a philosophy of being. It proposes that the state in the Global South must be a moral and communicative agent. It must rebuild meaning not only in institutions, but also in individuals.

The post-colonial world inherited states without sovereignty and governments without power. Developmental statecraft recognizes this rupture. It rebuilds voice and restores agency.

The crisis of the South is not only economic. It is epistemic and communicative. We were conquered not only by armies but by narratives. Hence, my argument is that our languages must be defended in code, in corpus, in journals, and in the classroom. Sovereignty has to be spoken. It must be coded. It must be narrated.

Here we must recall the intellectual lineage that shaped our struggle. Frantz Fanon taught us that decolonization is a program of total disordering of colonial meaning. Samir Amin insisted that peripheral nations cannot develop within structures designed to keep them subordinate. Archie Mafeje of South Africa reminded us that anthropology itself became a weapon against our people. Developmental statecraft inherits this tradition. It insists that the state must become an active shaper of public value, not a passive administrator of imported doctrine. It must guide markets, mobilize society and rebuild knowledge systems that colonialism sought to extinguish.

The developmental statecraft must become a pedagogical state that listens before it instructs. Communication is the essence of legitimacy. Power is only just when it is intelligible, and authority is only moral when it listens.

Remembering transforms survival into agency. It turns memory into movement. It restores humanity as the center of politics.

Hegemonic statecraft is the moral continuation of fascism. Developmental statecraft is the remembering of that which fascism dis-membered.

Let us go forth and hold high the banner of solidarity. For if we do not do so, we will perish together. It is not only those who bear the brunt of having bombs dropped on them on a daily basis in Middle East, but us too, who may live in territories, where we think there's peace. We will suffer as we are continuing to suffer. We've seen the tyranny of hegemonic statecraft manifest itself through trade wars and other such means. We know that many nations, as small as the Republic of Lesotho, are bearing the brunt of this new form of fascism, which does not always appear or parade with soldiers in uniform but also uses or employs other global methods of power to subjugate others.

Thank you!

3.2 Imbalance and Reconstruction of the International Order—Voices of the Global South

3.2.1 Historical Reflections on the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations

• Speaker: Liang Zhanjun

• Year: 2025

The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 stands as the most significant event in human history concerning the pursuit of effective global governance. Though not the first global international organization—the League of Nations was founded after World War I—the League proved to be a failed international institution. For instance, its response to Japan's invasion of China following the September 18 Incident in 1931 was a case of failure. Consequently, during the latter stages of World War II, the international community resolved to establish an entirely new international organization, giving birth to the United Nations. The UN's founding was built upon the lessons learned from the bloodshed of two world wars and the failures of the League of Nations. Over the past eight decades, history has demonstrated that the United Nations remains the most authoritative, representative, and universal international organization to date, achieving remarkable success in maintaining world peace and security, as well as promoting human development and prosperity.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. The UN's official website showcases related commemorative activities centered on the core theme of "Building a Shared Future." The organization has organized a series of events highlighting its founding principles and practical orientation. From a historical perspective, at least three objectively recognized facts can be summarized.



The first point to emphasize is this: The United Nations is the fruit of victory in the global war against fascism. Its founders were the victorious nations, embodying international justice. The UN is not merely an international organization constructed by the victors, for the UN Charter—as the foundation of the United Nations—actually constitutes the core pillar of the postwar international system and the norms governing international relations. It is the cornerstone of the postwar international order. The four main purposes and seven principles embodied in the UN Charter represent international justice. For instance, the four main purposes include maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, promoting international cooperation, and coordinating the actions of nations. Furthermore, the principles emphasized in the Charter—such as sovereign equality, respecting and fulfilling obligations, peaceful settlement of disputes, prohibition of the use of force, and non-interference in internal affairs—all hold universal significance for the construction of the post-war international order. These purposes and principles do not merely reflect the will of the victorious nations but represent the fundamental norms universally recognized by the post-war international community. Therefore, from this perspective, although the 51 founding members at the United Nations' inception were all based on the anti-fascist alliance and the victorious camp, it was not an international organization constructed solely to serve the interests of the victorious nations. Currently, certain right-wing forces or groups attempt to undermine the United Nations' authority by exploiting this perspective, a view that is profoundly misguided. As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has emphasized, the founding of the United Nations eighty years ago was inextricably linked to preventing a third world war. Today, we once again face an era of heightened uncertainty where the possibility of a third world war looms large. Commemorating the United Nations' eightieth anniversary thus carries special significance.

Secondly, it must be emphasized that the United Nations' eighty-year history demonstrates that the UN, founded on the Charter, has served as both the cornerstone of the post-World War II international order and the guardian of global peace. Although initially dominated by the victorious powers, the UN did not permanently exclude the defeated nations or fascist states. In fact, starting in 1955, former wartime defeated nations such as Germany, Japan, and Italy—the principal instigators of World War II—were successively admitted to the United Nations. Italy joined on December 14, 1955, Japan joined in 1956, and Germany, then divided into East and West Germany, was admitted somewhat later in 1973. Moreover, other fascist satellite states during WWII, such as Romania and Bulgaria, were also largely admitted to the UN during this period. This demonstrates that even during the Cold War, the UN had become a global international organization inclusive of victorious

nations, defeated nations, and all countries. Therefore, today's attacks on the UN by right-wing forces lack factual basis.

三个阶段:

1.战后、2.冷战、3.冷战后

战败国加入联合国

意大利 1955年12月14日

日本 1956年12月18日

德意志联邦共和国、德意志民主共和国1973年9月18日

1990年10月3日两个德国合并

The UN's 80-year development can be broadly divided into three phases: the pre-Cold War era, the Cold War period, and the post-Cold War era, each bearing distinct characteristics of its time. The first phase was dominated by the victorious powers. The second phase saw the UN expand due to the confrontation between the two Cold War blocs, admitting not only defeated nations but also newly emerging Third World countries. Throughout this process, the two major blocs led by the United States and the Soviet Union actively promoted expansion, though their primary motivation was often to recruit allies and strengthen their respective camps. After the Cold War, the dissolution of the Soviet Union led to a period of U.S. unipolar dominance, resulting in a trend where the United States bypassed the UN to take the lead in resolving many international disputes and issues. This marginalization of the UN persists to this day.

This raises a third issue. The current turbulent international landscape and the strategic rivalry among major Western powers have effectively posed a severe challenge to the United Nations' authority, requiring us to pool our wisdom to uphold its authority. To date, the challenges facing the United Nations include not only the rampant climate crisis, worsening inequality, and deepening poverty, but more tangibly, the escalation of wars and conflicts in many regions. The danger persists that regional conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Palestinian Israeli conflict, and the India-Pakistan conflict could spill over into a third world war. Particularly noteworthy is the apparent rise in the desire to resolve national disputes through war, coupled with the resurgence of far-right forces, which has placed the United Nations in a passive position when addressing these issues. The primary reason lies in the failure to uphold the principle of unanimity among major powers within the UN Security Council's permanent membership, due to their

alliance policies or great power rivalries, thereby presenting new challenges to the United Nations.

Regarding how to strengthen the UN's authority, His Excellency Philemon Yang, President of the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly, once stated: "Looking ahead, we must remember history, celebrate achievements, and build the future together on the foundation of the UN Charter." This reminds us that upholding the UN's authority first requires reflecting on history, drawing lessons, and reinvigorating advocacy for the purposes of the UN Charter. To this end, I would like to propose three suggestions:

First, leverage the commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of the victory in World War II and the founding of the United Nations to intensify the interpretation and promotion of the correct historical perspective on WWII and the purposes of the UN Charter. While Chinese academia has established a foundation in UN studies, there remains significant room for expansion overall.

Second, enhance United Nations research and promote public education on the history of the United Nations. This can be achieved through textbooks and regular history education, with a focus on explaining the United Nations' authority, legitimacy, and historical contributions.

Third, support institutional and systemic reforms within the United Nations. This includes championing the multilateralism advocated by the UN, jointly upholding its authority, and safeguarding world peace.

3.2.2 Adjustments to the International Order Since the 20th Century: Lessons Learned and Prospects for the 21st Century

• Speaker: Lin Limin

• Year: 2025

Regarding the evolution of the international order since the 20th century and its historical and contemporary realities, I will engage in discussion with you all primarily through three key topics.

The first topic concerns what I believe to be three major realignments of the international order since the 20th century. Broadly speaking, the first occurred at the beginning of the 20th century. Lenin termed this the stage of imperialist formation, while scholars studying modernization refer to it as the transition of world history from fragmented to integrated development. Globalization researchers label it the first phase of globalization, or the initial completion of globalization. Once globalization was achieved and world history entered an integrated development phase, it necessitated an international order adapted to globalization and the holistic development of world history.

At that time, the dominant players on the international stage were eight imperialist nations: the United States, Japan, and the European powers of Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Hungary. They neither possessed nor could have conceived of building an international order for the era of globalization based on concepts like a community with a shared future for mankind, or the common prosperity, progress, and peace of all nations and peoples. Instead, they established a series of unequal treaties and an unequal treaty system. It was precisely this system of unequal treaties that precipitated World War I, as imperialist powers redivided their colonial holdings. This was followed by the post-war Versailles-Washington system. Such chaotic international order laid the groundwork for the outbreak of World War II. This constituted the first major adjustment: an order dominated by eight imperialist powers—the US, Japan, and European nations—that was inherently disorderly and ultimately led to another world war.

The second adjustment to the international order in the 20th century is linked to World War II. World War II possessed three defining characteristics. First, its just cause: the war's legitimacy lay in opposing aggression and fascism. The fascist regimes of Germany, Japan, and Italy pursued policies of national annihilation and genocide against their victims, sparking global resistance. This war, centered on anti-aggression and anti-fascism, was a just war—a key factor in the Allied victory.

The second characteristic of WWII was its popular nature. Vast numbers of people enthusiastically joined the war effort, with over 1 billion people worldwide participating—representing more than 80% of the global population at the time. In Asia, the peoples of China, Southeast Asia, the Korean Peninsula, and India all fought extensively; in Africa, the peoples of colonial and semi-colonial nations like Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, and Ethiopia also fought widely; In the Americas, nations like Brazil not only participated in the war but also supplied vast quantities of war materials to the Allied forces. Additionally, in Europe, peoples in the Balkans, Southern Europe, and occupied Western European countries waged diverse forms of resistance. The participation of over a billion people worldwide underscored the people-centered nature of World War II, serving as another crucial factor in the ultimate victory of the global anti-fascist alliance.

The third characteristic of World War II was its progressive nature, stemming from its popular and just cause. The progressive aspects of this war are numerous, but they can be summarized in two key points. First, it sparked a global decolonization movement. The colonial and semi-colonial systems established by eight imperialist powers—including the United States, Europe, and Japan—before the war became unsustainable. Following the conflict, a wave of global decolonization swept across the world, with over 100 nations achieving independence. This gave rise to a large, diverse group of newly independent nations—the Non-Aligned Movement and Third World countries—spanning Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This foundation laid the groundwork for today's "Global South." Second, it led to the establishment of the United Nations system. Despite these advances, the international balance of power remained favorable to Western imperialist powers like the US, Britain, and France. Due to their influence, the post-war international order, while incorporating some progressive adjustments, also perpetuated certain flaws of the Versailles-Washington system—such as great-power hegemony and Eurocentrism. The post-war international order played a positive role in preventing another global catastrophe, yet it achieved little in fostering shared development. A glaring flaw was the perfunctory handling of Japan's militarism after the war, failing to address its core issues. This allowed Japanese militarists to evade profound reflection on their war crimes and historical responsibilities, creating a significant political and historical threat to peace in Asia and the world that persists to this day. Therefore, when evaluating the post-WWII international order, while acknowledging its progressive aspects, we must also recognize its significant limitations. It is precisely these limitations that led to the emergence of the US-Soviet Cold War, continuous regional conflicts, and persistent global imbalances and inequalities following the war.

The third major realignment of the international order in the 20th century occurred following the end of the Cold War. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the West and the United States proclaimed the "End of History," declaring their victory in the Cold War. Against this backdrop, they naturally vied for, scrambled to dominate, and even monopolized the leadership of this third major realignment of the international order since the 20th century. They sought to construct the international order according to their own ideology and logic, including forcibly imposing systems such as the separation of powers, one-person-one-vote democracy, and absolute marketization on the Global South. At that time, the US, Europe, and Japan accounted for over three-quarters of the world's economic output, over three-quarters of global trade volume, and over three-quarters of military spending and military strength. They also held hegemony in finance, technology, media, and discourse, enabling them to act as they pleased. The outcome was that the post-Cold War international order reshaped under their leadership effectively established the global hegemony of roughly one billion people in the US, Europe, and Japan—encompassing military supremacy, economic dominance, financial control, narrative hegemony, and democratic supremacy. This directly precipitated the 21st century's global conflagrations, rampant terrorism, transnational crime, drug trafficking, epidemics, as well as accelerated global warming and resource scarcity.

Thus, the post-Cold War international order proved more tense, contradictory, and problematic than its Cold War predecessor. After taking office, Trump pursued an "America First" policy, ceasing to loudly proclaim America's continued global leadership. The new U.S. National Security Strategy enshrined this approach and philosophy in policy documents. All this amounted to a direct declaration that the post-Cold War international order reshaping orchestrated by the U.S., Europe, and Japan had ended in failure.

The three major realignments of the international order since the 20th century occurred: the first before World War II, the second after World War II, and the third after the Cold War. Why did these three major realignments of the international order follow one after another and end in failure? What are the root causes? What useful experiences, lessons, and insights can we draw from them?

Many insights emerge, but three points deserve particular emphasis. The first insight requires reflection on how the brutal redivision of the world by the US, Japan, and European powers after World War I disrupted the globalization process of the 20th century. Post-war imperialist victors like the US, Britain, and France prioritized self-interest, sowing the seeds for World War II's inevitable outbreak. They bear full responsibility for the complete failure of the first post-war

adjustment to the 20th-century international order. By shifting all blame for World War I onto Germany and imposing excessive punishment, they created the economic, political, and social conditions that allowed fascism to rise and flourish in Germany, ultimately driving Germany to become the primary instigator of World War II. Not only did they squander the first opportunity to establish a fair and just international order from the perspective of a "community with a shared future for mankind," but they also directly contributed to making World War II both unavoidable and far more devastating.

The second lesson requires reflection on the post-World War II chaos in the international order. After World War II, humanity once again missed the opportunity to adjust the international order, and the responsibility lies with Western powers such as the United States, Europe, and Japan. During the second major adjustment of the international order in the 20th century, emerging nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America—the Third World, now referred to as the "Global South"—indeed contributed to the progress of the post-war international order. However, their widespread poverty and backwardness at the time severely limited their capacity to play a significant historical role. Western powers like the United States and Britain, wielding formidable strength, exploited their dominance for self-interest, causing the world to squander another chance to establish a fair and just international order. For instance, the U.S. Marshall Plan aided Western Europe while excluding the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, fracturing the world and making the Cold War inevitable. The phrase "one walnut, two halves" aptly captures the post-war division of the world and the failure of international order reform.

The third lesson requires reflection on the post-Cold War process of international order adjustment. First, despite holding comprehensive advantages after the Cold War, the US, Europe, and Japan prioritized the interests of their "golden billion" over the collective welfare of the world's 8 billion people. Second, they flaunted their superiority and pursued hegemony, failing to grasp the importance of equality among nations regardless of size, strength, wealth, or poverty. This principle is precisely what we in the "Global South" must remember as we advance the realignment of the international order. Third, they interfered in the internal affairs of "Global South" nations, forcibly imposing one-person-one-vote democracy, separation of powers, and absolute market systems. Moreover, they resort to military force at the slightest provocation—waging two Gulf Wars, the Kosovo War, the Afghanistan War, the Syrian War, the Libyan War, and now the Gaza War—while striking Iran, attacking Qatar, and threatening Venezuela and Cuba. Finally, they apply double standards globally, justifying their hypocrisy with righteous indignation.

A recent prime example occurred when a French publication interviewed John Bolton, Trump's first National Security Advisor, asking him to define a "rules-based international order." Bolton responded with great conviction: "What is a 'rules-based international order'? There is no such thing. In the international arena, only power matters." Coming from Trump's national security advisor, can we still believe the West's talk of a "rules-based international order"? It is merely a tool to deceive us Southern nations. Now, not only the United States, but also Europe and Japan, no longer subscribe to the Western-branded rhetoric of a so-called "rules-based international order."

In summary, despite facing three historic opportunities for major international order adjustments since the 20th century, the United States and Western nations deliberately squandered them all. This has provided us with valuable lessons and insights regarding international order adjustments.

First, the great-power chauvinism pursued by Western nations like the US, UK, and France is untenable in the 21st-century world. When the window of opportunity arrives, "shaping" a new international order cannot proceed without the leading role of major powers, nor without their coordination and cooperation. But major powers must act fairly and justly, with a "global vision"—that is, they must proceed from the interests and aspirations of the majority of nations, not merely from the interests of a few major powers, and certainly not engage in "great-power chauvinism" or "great-power carve-ups." Trump's threats to use force against Venezuela, his attempts to seize Greenland, and his declaration that Canada is America's "51st state" all represent a historical recurrence of unchecked "great power chauvinism" that threatens international fairness and justice.

Second, we must uphold the principle of international democracy, rejecting great-power dictatorship. Instead, we must adhere to non-interference in internal affairs and the principle of equality for all nations, regardless of size, wealth, strength, or color. Building a new international order must fully consider the demands of the Global South and respect its voice.

Third, we must uphold the principles of common security, common prosperity, and common development. In this regard, China's concept of a "community with a shared future for mankind" offers new ideas and a conceptual foundation for transforming the international order in the 21st century. First, China has pioneered four major initiatives: the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, and the Global Governance Initiative. These initiatives demonstrate that building a new international order is a matter for all 8 billion people, not just a select few. Second, China first proposed the concept of

a "community with a shared future for mankind," whose core tenet is that all nations—regardless of size or wealth—must engage in equality and mutual assistance. Third, building a "community with a shared future for mankind" is an imperative of our times. Having missed three opportunities to establish a fair and just international order, humanity must not squander the fourth.

To achieve this, we must first address global peace, including resolving ongoing conflicts and arms races worldwide. The foremost task for the Global South is to prevent the U.S. from attacking Venezuela. Another priority is to halt the expansion and strengthening of the U.S.-Japan military alliance. Second is collective security, tackling transnational crimes, drug trafficking, and similar threats. Third is shared development, overcoming imbalances, wealth disparities, and the digital divide. Fourth is combating global warming. Fifth is the disorderly development of artificial intelligence.

Disruptive technologies, artificial intelligence's focus on scale, market dominance, rapid iteration cycles, and government leadership—these four aspects determine that the new developments in disruptive technologies benefit the populous Global South over the smaller populations of the U.S. and the West; they benefit latecomers by disrupting the monopolization of technological knowledge markets; They promote the diffusion of wealth and power, altering the imbalance of strength between East and West; they facilitate the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, offering opportunities to expand the interests and influence of the Global South. However, how to manage artificial intelligence also poses a challenge.

Addressing these global challenges and ensuring international peace and development in the future requires drawing upon China's "Four Major Initiatives" and the concept of a "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind." Currently, the Global South must unite in concerted effort, seize new opportunities arising from the transformation of the international order, actively shape a new international order, establish proactive and effective international institutional frameworks to tackle various global issues, and propose new international concepts.

3.2.3 The Path to Global Equilibrium: The Yalta System, the UN Charter, and the Balance Required for a New International Order

• Speaker: Carlos Ron

• Year: 2025

We are honored to gather here today, eighty years after the victory over fascism. This nation not only defeated fascism on the battlefield but also eradicated it at its social and economic roots.

The emergence of fascism in Western Europe and Japan was no historical accident, but the inevitable outcome of systemic collapse. Its crisis stemmed from an unregulated capitalist economy: the unchecked flow of capital led to extreme income inequality, rampant financial speculation, and a systemic collapse on the scale of the Great Depression. This economic corruption was further exacerbated by two ideological pillars:

The demonization of "the other." Foreigners and outsiders were portrayed as the root cause of societal ills, becoming targets for organized hate campaigns.

Second, the promotion of exceptionalism and racial/ethnic supremacy. Examples like Hitler's Nazism or Japan's "Kokutai" doctrine fundamentally erred in their delusion that individual solutions could resolve collective societal challenges.

Fortunately, China offers the most compelling counterexample. We have witnessed firsthand how the Chinese model, through effective capital controls and central planning, has lifted 800 million people out of poverty, proving that shared prosperity triumphs over vicious competition. China's promotion of the "Global Civilization Initiative," which respects cultural diversity and advocates mutual learning, directly counters the dangerous drift toward exceptionalism.

This is precisely why defending history and memory is paramount. We must unequivocally state: the neoliberal consensus now dominating the Global North is dangerously recreating the economic conditions that originally fostered fascism. In the face of Hollywood and Western political discourse distorting historical truths, we must safeguard historical memory to prevent the blurring of fascism's essence and avert the resurgence of new, dangerous forms of extremism.

The anti-fascist war defeated an ideology, but the Yalta system established after the war sowed new structural inequalities that continue to constrain the development of the Global South.

The peace framework established at the Yalta Conference gave birth to the United Nations. It was within this UN framework that many Third World nations like ours in Asia, Africa, and Latin America could truly meet, exchange ideas, and interact. In this sense, the Yalta system was necessary. Yet for the Global South, the Yalta system was not merely the starting point of the Cold War—it escalated the hot war. The so-called theory of spheres of influence among great powers further reconstructed a neo-colonialist division of the world.

For Latin America and the Caribbean, the Yalta system has forever confined us to the periphery of U.S. influence. This structural positioning meant our development was perpetually subordinate to the hegemonic center, a dynamic later incisively articulated by dependency theory. Despite Latin America's persistent resistance to this role, the United States' recent aggressive promotion of new Cold war thinking demonstrates that it still views our nations as objects for domination, manipulation, and resource plunder.

The Yalta system imposed "American national securityism" on Latin America, reinforcing existing colonial structures—particularly land ownership—while condoning human rights atrocities across the continent under the guise of anti-communism.

Social progress, income equality, and political participation continually yielded to Washington's political agenda, ultimately spawning atrocities like Operation Condor—a transnational terror campaign targeting democratic forces in Southern Cone nations. Today, security pretexts have shifted to counter-narcotics and counterterrorism, yet the U.S.-dominated essence remains unchanged.

Yet this dominance has spawned its antithesis: the spirit of Bandung and the spirit of the Havana Tricontinental Conference. The Non-Aligned Movement and the Third World solidarity ideology have pushed the anti-colonial and development agenda to the forefront.

Today, as post-Cold War unipolar hegemony faces crisis, the tide of multipolarity inevitably surges. At this juncture, we must ask: What are the objectives for this new phase?

In Latin America, the answer is deeply rooted in our history. Two centuries ago, as the Spanish Empire declined, Simón Bolívar proposed convening the Panama Congress to forge a unified Latin American pole. He saw this regional unity as essential to establishing "the balance of the world."

He astutely argued: "The European powers are ambitious, seeking to impose the shackles of servitude upon the rest of the world. All these regions should establish equilibrium among themselves and with Europe, thereby dismantling the latter's hegemonic advantage. I call this the 'Way of World Equilibrium.'"

The lesson is clear: successful multipolarity must always pursue equilibrium, not a new world order dominated by two or three major poles.

Today, Bolívar's world balance of power resonates directly with China's global initiatives:

The Global Security Initiative (GSI) pursues a "shared, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security vision," emphasizing the legitimate security concerns of all nations.

The Global Development Initiative (GDI) is committed to building a more equitable and balanced global development partnership.

The Global Governance Initiative (GGI) upholds sovereign equality and the rule of law based on the United Nations Charter.

The Cold War divided the world into spheres of influence, creating global imbalance. Now that the old order has collapsed, we must return to the ultimate bearer of world equilibrium: the United Nations Charter itself.

The United Nations has existed for eighty years. Undoubtedly, its performance has been disappointing. A wealth of documentation records the genocide in Palestine, revealing that the core principles of the UN Charter have been violated. Why has the UN system become paralyzed?

The failure lies not in the Charter itself, but in selective implementation of objectives and structural flaws in governance. The UN has failed to prevent economic blockades against sovereign nations, to avert unilateral coercive measures imposed on one-third of the world's countries, or to halt extrajudicial killings affecting citizens across multiple nations in the Caribbean.

Yet the struggle to defend international law remains paramount. The UN Charter stands as the sole universally recognized, legally binding normative document safeguarding sovereign equality and the right to self-determination. To abandon the UN Charter is to betray human civilization.

This is precisely the value of important initiatives like the Group of Friends of the United Nations Charter, in which Venezuela and China jointly participate. Since its establishment in 2021, the Group has consistently resisted unilateral

interpretations of the so-called "rules-based order." Frankly speaking, this is nothing more than imperialism in new packaging—a ploy to simultaneously act as player, referee, and rule-maker in the face of shrinking profit margins.

To avert a devastating war that would end human life, and recognizing that inaction inevitably leads to war, we must strengthen the United Nations. Only by relying on the international legal system embodied in the UN Charter can we achieve the world equilibrium advocated by Bolívar two centuries ago.

This requires advancing three major structural reforms:

Breaking the Geopolitical Hegemony: Implement a rotating system for the UN General Assembly and Secretariat to dismantle geographical dominance, initiating the relocation of some headquarters institutions to capitals in the Global South;

Breaking financial veto power: We must ensure that more economically powerful nations increase their contributions to break the financial control exercised by the United States in decision-making processes. Only then can we end America's de facto financial veto over key UN institutions.

Strengthening the General Assembly's functions: Action must be taken to significantly enhance the power and decision-making capacity of all nations within the UN General Assembly, ensuring equal representation for every country. Despite immense challenges, mechanisms must be established to allow the General Assembly to override Security Council vetoes by a supermajority vote in cases of genocide or illegal coercive measures.

We must propel the United Nations toward becoming a truly democratic global balancing force.

Friends,

History repeats itself in astonishing ways: Between February and March 1942, Nazi Germany dispatched submarines to Venezuela's coast, attempting to seize control of Allied oil supplies. These submarines sank multiple Venezuelan tankers, claiming the lives of 70 people.

Today, fascist warships threaten my homeland once more. Illegal U.S. patrol operations have claimed the lives of nearly 70 of my compatriots, with the same objective: to control oil supplies.

Unless we vigorously uphold the dignity of international law, defend history and memory, and promote a just and balanced international order, another fascist war may well begin in the Caribbean. Thank you.

3.3 Settling the Debts of War, Refusing to Allow Okinawa to Once Again Become a Battlefield

3.3.1 The Significance of the 80th Anniversary of China's Victory in the War Against Fascism and the War of Resistance Against Japan in East Asia: The Pragmatism of South Korea's Lee Jae-myung Administration and the Emergence of Japan's Ultra-Right Takaichi Administration

• Speaker: Suh Sung

• Year: 2025

On September 3 this year, commemorative events marking the "80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the Victory of the World Anti-Fascist War" were held at Tiananmen Square. These events carried forward the spirit of the September 3 commemorations held a decade prior, holding profound significance not only for China but also for national liberation and peace across East Asia.

Its core assertions centered on two points: "the first complete victory in a national liberation war against foreign invasion since modern times" and "the primary Eastern theater of the anti-fascist war." This signifies both the declaration of victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan and the declaration of victory as a member of the United Nations in the anti-fascist war. Japan was a war-guilty nation, while China was a victorious nation.

In 2014, the National People's Congress established four commemorative dates related to the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression: the September 18th Incident Memorial Day (September 18, 1931), the National Memorial Day for the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre (December 13), and the Marco Polo Bridge Incident Memorial Day (July 7, 1937), which served as the trigger for the Sino-Japanese War. September 3rd was designated as the Victory Day of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. This decision aims to comprehensively and systematically commemorate the people's war of resistance.

I have always been curious about how China provides support or compensation to victims and those who sacrificed. During my 2005 visit to the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, I met survivors there.

That elderly woman was only a teenager during the Nanjing Massacre. Four male family members—her father, uncle, and two brothers—were all slaughtered. She endured a life of considerable hardship afterward, with little meaningful support from the Chinese government. Yet she explained that China faced immense

difficulties after its founding. First came the Korean War, then the Great Leap Forward, followed by the Cultural Revolution. With such internal turmoil, it was simply impossible to provide individual support to every citizen—an unavoidable reality. Hearing this, I gained fresh perspective on the extraordinarily arduous path China has walked since World War II.

I teach a course at university on the nature of East Asia. Most people have little understanding of what East Asia truly is. Crucially, the concept of "Asia" itself is not an indigenous term for this region. It emerged during Europe's Age of Exploration, when imperialists invading the area labeled its inhabitants "Asians" as they expanded their dominions. In other words, it was not us who declared "We are Asians," but European imperialists who branded us as such—a concept imposed from the outside. That was the mark stamped upon us by Western imperialists.

Regarding the Opium War—often called the dirtiest war in world history—I believe everyone is well acquainted with it. This conflict served as a catalyst for a profound shift in the region's worldview. Prior to this, the Qing Dynasty, once the world's most powerful and prosperous empire, collapsed. The tribute and investiture system crumbled, giving rise to the "treaty system." Without delving into specifics, this treaty system essentially imposed unequal treaties upon the region.

Faced with Western imperialist aggression, Japan chose not to confront it but instead opted for imitation and emulation. Under the guise of "civilization and enlightenment," it pursued a policy of "enriching the nation and strengthening the military," establishing a militaristic state centered on the Emperor and invading neighboring countries. Japan established a hegemonic order centered on itself, embellishing it with the rhetoric of "Asianism," "East Asia," and "Revival of Asia." It proposed the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere concept and the Greater East Asia Declaration, which embodied Japan's ambitions for global domination. However, due to the fierce national liberation struggles of Asian peoples and conflicts with established imperialist powers, Japan ultimately suffered a devastating defeat.

In East Asia, since modern times, countless lives and properties were plundered and destroyed under imperialist exploitation and aggression. The peoples of East Asia yearned to live in peace free from war, violence, and plunder, yet they were compelled to resist imperialists and attempts to enslave them as nations. The universalization of national liberation struggles in this region—namely, the anti-Japanese struggle—was inevitable.

However, even after the demise of Japanese imperialism, the United States initiated the Cold War era of encircling socialist nations through anti-communism and

hegemonic ambitions. Due to America's so-called Containment policy, the reckoning for imperialist crimes like aggression and colonization vanished into thin air. Japan's reparations to victim nations were left unresolved; Japan refused to pay and maintains this stance to this day. Even now, they claim they did nothing wrong.

By 1990, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, demands for compensation for individual harms inflicted by the Japanese military—including the "comfort women" system, forced conscription, forced labor, mass killings, human experimentation, and the use of poison gas—rapidly proliferated. Japan has consistently adopted an attitude of ignoring or evading responsibility. To achieve peace in East Asia, justice must prevail: the facts of the atrocities must be investigated and acknowledged, apologies and reparations must be made, and measures to prevent recurrence must be implemented. In other words, the past must be reckoned with. Yet Japan persists in forgetting and denying its history.

After World War II, Japan became America's most powerful forward base in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States abandoned the United Nations mandate to dismantle Japanese militarism, instead promoting the creation of the Self-Defense Forces and Japan's rearmament and remilitarization. Through the 1952 U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, the entire Japanese archipelago was transformed into a U.S. military base. During the Cold War, the Self-Defense Forces were concentrated in Hokkaido to counter Russia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, military forces were shifted to the southwestern region of Okinawa to counter China and the Korean Peninsula.

Originally, Article 9 of the Constitution was a "no-war, non-militarization" clause designed to prevent the revival of Japanese imperialism. However, during the Cold War, the United States fully militarized the Self-Defense Forces and pursued the expansion of the military-industrial complex. This trend reached its extreme under the Abe administration, marked by the resurgence of militaristic slogans like "Take Back Japan!" The Kishida cabinet abandoned the longstanding "exclusive defense" commitment, announced a "counterstrike capability" implying preemptive strikes, and passed the Security Three Laws significantly increasing the military budget.

Ishiba, labeled right-wing, unexpectedly pursued a moderate course but ended his short-lived cabinet within a year. Amid this turmoil emerged Sanae Takaichi, dubbed the "female Abe." As widely known, Takaichi made the reckless remark that "an incident in Taiwan would be a matter of life and death for Japan," exposing Japan's intent to intervene in Taiwan affairs. Her administration is viewed with concern as a potential disruptor of East Asian peace.

China, the greatest victim of Japanese imperialist aggression, was granted amnesty without any reparations through the 1972 Japan-China Joint Communiqué. For

Korea, the focal point of colonial rule, Japan denied responsibility for colonial governance over its southern half through the Korea-Japan Basic Treaty—a component of the San Francisco Treaty system. The military regime on the Korean Peninsula granted Japan absolution for its colonial rule via "economic aid in the nature of diplomatic congratulatory funds." Under the Yoon Suk-yeol administration, national interests were abandoned altogether, with South Korea instead representing Japanese interests and bestowing a pardon.

Imperialists then divided Korea, which had suffered Japanese colonial rule, using pro-American and pro-Japanese dictators as puppets to forcibly integrate the southern half into the U.S.-led anti-communist bloc. This resulted in the massacre of countless people during events like the Jeju April 3 Incident and the Yeosu-Suncheon Uprising, and intervention in the Korean War erupted over national reunification, claiming millions of lives. Through the fierce struggles of people yearning for self-reliance, national reunification, and democracy, the Kim Dae-jung administration emerged. Breaking through the tyranny of pro-American, pro-Japanese, anti-national regimes like those of Park Chung-Hee and Chun Doo-hwan, it criticized anti-communist right-wing dictatorships and American domination, paving the way for progressive governments under Roh Moo-hyun and Moon Jae-in.

On December 3, 2024, progressive forces that halted Yoon Suk-yeol's military rebellion and reclaimed power established the Lee Jae-myung administration. Although the Lee Jae-myung administration entered office under the banner of "pragmatism," it prioritizes the stability of people's livelihoods to ensure domestic citizens can live securely and supports pacifism opposing war. To this end, it advocates a people-first economy and balanced diplomacy that avoids pro-American or pro-Japanese bias, promoting reconciliation and cooperation between North and South Korea. Its approach does not seek immediate solutions but instead utilizes existing relationships and resources while maintaining them, advancing toward goals incrementally. It strives to maximize the rights of "citizens" as sovereign agents, placing the people at the center to realize a society governed by "common sense." While some criticize this approach as too moderate and slow, in today's world where ideologies and blocs have collapsed, and having witnessed the downfall of socialism, "pragmatism" may be the only realistic path forward.

In short, to realize a world of equality, freedom, and peace, justice must be achieved—settling past accounts is an indispensable task. Regarding East Asia's historical reckoning, China has established the standards of "anti-fascism" and "resistance against Japanese aggression." This framework is absolutely vital for opposing imperialist invasions and rule perpetrated in East Asia since the Opium Wars and for correctly positioning national liberation struggles within history.

For the people of East Asia to live with dignity, I believe the only path forward is to oppose the imperialist hegemony of the United States and Japan, strive to restore the rights of the people, and achieve lasting peace through broad solidarity.

3.3.2 The Resurgence of Japanese Militarism and Preparations for War Against China

• Speaker: Lin Boyao

• Year: 2025

The theme I wish to address is: Japanese militarism stands on the eve of revival. Having lived in Japan for many years, I have experienced discriminatory terms like "Chinaman" in my youth, yet I remain deeply fond of Japan's landscapes, culture, and people. My children and descendants also reside in Japan. I have always hoped war would never recur. However, Japan currently finds itself in an extremely perilous situation.

I. Japan is once again preparing to wage aggressive war

"Militarism" refers to an ideology and system where a nation subordinates all spheres—political, economic, cultural—to military interests, prioritizing institutions and policies that serve warfare. Core power typically resides with military personnel or those with military backgrounds; even when led by politicians espousing militarist ideology, the essence remains the same. By this definition, we must recognize: Japan now teeters on the brink of a new militarist resurgence.

Let us briefly revisit history. After its defeat, Japan established national policies in its newly enacted constitution—drafted by the Diet—that renounced war, prohibited maintaining military forces, and denied the right to wage war. It declared that war or force would not be used as a means to resolve international disputes and abandoned the maintenance of land, sea, and air forces, as well as other military capabilities. We refer to this as the "Peace Constitution." Yet reality has long diverged from this spirit. In 1951, concurrent with the signing of the Treaty of San Francisco, the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty was signed at America's insistence. In 1950, Japan established the "Police Reserve Force" at U.S. request, nominally as a police auxiliary unit; it was renamed the "Security Force" in 1952; and reorganized as the "Self-Defense Forces" in 1954, effectively constituting a military force. Subsequently, under U.S. protection, Japan continuously expanded its military capabilities. From the old U.S.-Japan Security Treaty of 1952 to the new one in 1960, Japan effectively committed to a path of militarization. Since 1976, Japan's defense budget had been capped at 1% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product). However, this restriction was lifted starting in 2021, with the government planning to increase defense spending to 2% of GDP by fiscal year 2027. Military expenditures are now rising rapidly each year. Sanae Takaichi also claimed China aims to reach a 2% military spending target by 2027, yet Japan has already achieved this ratio ahead of

schedule in this year's budget. A defense budget of 2% of GDP would position Japan as the world's fourth-largest military power. These developments signal Japan's gradual shift toward renewed militarism and imperialism. Japan's current military expansion poses a significant challenge to the post-war international order centered on the United Nations and to regional stability in Asia. We must remain highly vigilant against this trend.

On July 1, 2014, then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe unilaterally altered the longstanding government interpretation that "exercising collective self-defense (Note 1) violates the Constitution" during a cabinet meeting, citing "dramatic changes in Japan's security environment." He stipulated that the Self-Defense Forces could use force when "a country closely related to Japan suffers an armed attack, and the rights and lives of Japanese nationals face a fundamental threat." That same year, Japan enacted the Act on the Protection of Specified Secrets, one of whose purposes was to prevent espionage. Under this cabinet decision, the conditions for Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defense include: Japan or a country closely related to Japan is subjected to an armed attack, and that attack poses a clear danger to "Japanese nationals"; no alternative means exist to address the threat; and the use of force is limited to the minimum necessary. These conditions are known as the "new three conditions" for exercising force. Numerous civic groups, including the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, opposed this, arguing that permitting the exercise of collective self-defense violates the Constitution.

Nevertheless, Japan's Diet passed the Security-Related Legislation in 2015, which, based on the 2014 cabinet resolution, advocates permitting the exercise of collective self-defense rights. In August 2015, over 100,000 people gathered in front of the Diet building, loudly protesting that the government and Diet were undermining the spirit of the Constitution in an extreme manner. However, the situation ultimately progressed according to the government's intentions.

In 2021, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe publicly interfered in China's internal affairs by declaring that "an incident in Taiwan is an incident for Japan, and an incident for Japan is an incident for the Japan-U.S. alliance. "In December 2022, the Kishida Cabinet adopted the "Three Security Documents" (National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy (now Defense Program Outline), and Defense Force Development Plan), explicitly declaring Japan possesses "enemy base attack capability (counterstrike capability)," marking a major shift from "exclusively defensive posture" to "offensive defense. "Since then, Japanese lawmakers from both ruling and opposition parties have frequently visited Taiwan, inciting "Taiwan independence" forces and openly displaying hostility and provocation toward China's cause of national reunification. On August 8, 2023, former Japanese Prime

Minister and former LDP President Taro Aso made remarks in Taipei stating that "we must be prepared to fight (China)," inciting Taiwan independence forces and seriously provoking China. To this day, Japan has not completely abandoned its old delusions as the colonial power that invaded Taiwan.

Achieving national reunification is the century-old aspiration of the Chinese nation since the Opium War, aimed at ending imperialist partition of our homeland and realizing national rejuvenation. China absolutely cannot accept interference or obstruction from Japan and the United States in the cause of national reunification. At the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China held in October 2022, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized, "We will spare no effort to pursue peaceful reunification with the utmost sincerity. "As long as the "Taiwan independence" forces do not declare "Taiwan independence" on their own or under the instigation of Japanese and American provocations, the mainland will not take military action against Taiwan. However, Japan's actions blatantly disregard the commitment made in the 1972 Sino-Japanese Joint Communiqué on the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries, which states: "The Government of the People's Republic of China reaffirms that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The Japanese government fully understands and respects the Chinese government's position on this matter and adheres to the position set forth in Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation." Japan's actions also blatantly violate the fundamental principles of the 1978 Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship, which stipulate "mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs."

Furthermore, in July 2024, then-Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida openly provoked China by stating at the NATO summit that "Today's Ukraine could be tomorrow's East Asia. "In recent years, the Japanese government and media outlets have persistently distorted China's routine patrols by government vessels and facility construction in the South China Sea as "maritime expansion" and "unilaterally altering the status quo by force," leveling baseless accusations against China. Concepts such as the so-called "Freedom of Navigation Operations" and "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" hyped by Japan and the United States are, in fact, malicious political terms fabricated to advance a strategic encirclement of China. In fact, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea explicitly guarantees freedom of navigation for all vessels within territorial waters. China has repeatedly emphasized that its historical rights are not exclusive, and freedom of navigation has never been obstructed.

China's deployment of government vessels within its own territorial waters is a natural exercise of sovereign rights. As early as September 29, 1972, prior to the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations, Article 2 of the Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty signed between Japan and the Chiang Kai-shek regime explicitly stated: "Japan renounces all rights, claims, and demands with respect to Taiwan and the Penghu Islands, as well as the Nansha Islands (i.e., the Spratly Islands) and the Xisha Islands. "and renounces all rights, titles, and claims to Taiwan and the Penghu Islands, as well as the Nansha Islands (i.e., the Spratly Islands) and the Xisha Islands." Although China does not recognize the Treaty of San Francisco or the Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty, these provisions themselves fully demonstrate that the Allied Powers, including the United States, and Japan had long acknowledged China's sovereignty over the Spratly Islands and the Paracel Islands. Yet today's refusal to recognize this historical fact regarding socialist China is clearly driven by political motives and malicious double standards, rendering it utterly untenable.

Since 1970, Chinese students studying in the United States initiated the "Movement to Protect the Diaoyu Islands." Regarding the sovereignty of the Diaoyu Islands, the United States has repeatedly stated publicly that it "does not take sides between China and Japan," which effectively means that the United States does not recognize Japan's sovereignty claims. On September 11, 2012, Japan's Noda Cabinet pushed through the "nationalization" of the Diaoyu Islands, marking the commencement of new aggressive actions by Japan in the region. Japan also strongly asserted that the Diaoyu Islands should fall under the scope of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. Japan coerced the United States into including the Diaoyu Islands under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty by citing the transfer of "administrative rights" from the U.S. The U.S. was forced to accept this arrangement. In reality, this precisely reflects Japan's political intent to manipulate the U.S. into participating in its aggressive actions against other nations.

II. Japan is Advancing Preparations for War Against China

Currently, Japan is progressively constructing long-range missile bases and large-scale ammunition depots targeting China in the Ryukyu Arc (southwestern islands of Okinawa), Kyushu, and the Kansai region. These missiles possess medium-to-long-range strike capabilities capable of covering mainland China. Amami Ōshima, north of Okinawa Island, deployed anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile units as early as 2019. Off the coast of Tanega Shima, east of Amami Ōshima, Japan is advancing plans to transform Mago Island into a military stronghold. The island will feature an airport with two long runways, hangars, ammunition depots, and a military port, ultimately becoming a massive military facility. This facility will not only be the first joint training base for Japan's Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces in

history but will also serve as a shared military base for Japan and the United States. Across these islands and surrounding waters, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces and U.S. military frequently conduct joint military exercises simulating "warfare against China," even openly using civilian airports, city streets, parks, and other facilities for military training. With 70% of U.S.-Japan military bases concentrated in Okinawa, this has led to numerous incidents, including frequent cases of sexual violence by U.S. military personnel. However, the Japanese central government has long treated the Ryukyu Islands as a "domestic colony," consistently failing to address these issues seriously.

Since 2014, the Japanese government has pushed forward with plans to relocate the Futenma Air Station to Henoko. Despite fierce opposition from the Okinawa governor and the Okinawan people, who have waged persistent resistance with support from mainland Japanese citizens, the Japanese government has remained obstinate. It even dispatched Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels through the Taiwan Strait on three occasions—September 25, 2024, early February 2025, and June 12—to provoke China.

Japan's post-war path toward militarism stems primarily from internal factors, yet it is also closely intertwined with U.S. strategic interests in Asia and its military support for Japan. Following World War II, the United States sought to transform the Japanese archipelago into a frontline anti-communist bastion. Concurrently, the Japanese Emperor twice dispatched envoys to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) on September 19, 1947, and February 1948, delivering "Imperial Letters" that laid the conceptual foundation for Japan's current anti-communist military base strategy. (Note 2)

Notably, in April 2024, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida stated during a speech at the U.S. Congress: "On the spaceship called 'Freedom and Democracy,' Japan is proud to be a partner crew member alongside the United States. We stand ready to shoulder our responsibilities alongside the United States on the deck of this ship. Japan has joined hands with the United States in concerted action. Through sustained transformation, Japan has revised its National Security Strategy. In 2022, Japan resolved to substantially increase its defense budget to 2% of GDP by 2027, develop counterstrike capabilities, and enhance cybersecurity." Prime Minister Kishida declared emphatically before the U.S. Congress that Japan's Self-Defense Forces are a loyal ally of the United States. His speech earned enthusiastic applause from U.S. lawmakers, who rose to their feet four times to cheer him on. One foreign journalist even asked: "Which country's prime minister is Mr. Kishida, exactly?"

III. Japanese Military Leadership Proposes "Nuclear Deterrence" Against China

The U.S. military and Japan's Self-Defense Forces have conducted multiple joint comprehensive military exercises. In terms of specific policy, senior SDF officials have publicly advocated that the U.S. should implement "nuclear deterrence" against China when formulating military strategies toward Beijing. This marks the first time Japan's top military leadership has openly discussed nuclear threats.

From October 23 to November 1, 2024, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces and the U.S. military conducted a 10-day joint exercise codenamed "Keen Sword 25." The exercise mobilized approximately 45,000 troops, 40 vessels, and 370 aircraft, utilizing civilian airports and ports across multiple Japanese locations. The exercises also advanced the integration of the command systems between the Japanese and U.S. militaries.

From September 11 to 25, 2025, Japan and the United States once again conducted a joint military exercise codenamed "Resolute Dragon 25." The 15-day exercise mobilized approximately 15,000 troops from both sides. Following these two joint comprehensive exercises, the hypothetical adversary has been explicitly identified as China.

Recent policy proposals in the defense sector by senior uniformed officers of the Japan Self-Defense Forces are highly dangerous. Lieutenant General Kiyoshi Ogawa, former Director of the Western Army of the Ground Self-Defense Force, proposed: "If Taiwan faces a military attack, Japan should immediately recognize it as a 'nation' and establish formal cooperative response mechanisms." This assertion effectively amounts to advocating for "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan," severely violating international consensus and political commitments between China and Japan. It is utterly unacceptable. (Note 3)

Reports indicate that during the Japan-U.S. joint war game simulating a "Taiwan contingency," the highest-ranking uniformed officers of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces demanded that the U.S. military "respond to China's nuclear deterrence with nuclear deterrence." In February 2024, at the Central Command Post in the basement of the Ministry of Defense in Tokyo's Iidabashi district, then-Chief of the Joint Staff Yoshida Keisuke repeatedly made this demand in a forceful tone to then-Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Aquilino. Aquilino initially expressed reluctance but ultimately reluctantly agreed. (Note 4)

China has explicitly declared its policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and pledged not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. Despite this, the fact that the highest-ranking uniformed officer of Japan's Self-Defense Forces strongly demanded that the U.S. commander implement nuclear deterrence against China is utterly intolerable. Yet this incident has not sparked any

discussion in the Japanese Diet. Notably, Chief of the Joint Staff Yoshida, whose term was originally set to expire next April, abruptly stepped down on August 1 this year. It remains unclear whether this incident is connected to his resignation.

In March this year, former SDF Chief of Staff Shigeru Iwasaki was appointed as a political advisor to Taiwan's Executive Yuan. This move is widely interpreted as potentially signaling covert military collusion between Taiwan independence forces and senior Japanese military officials, constituting blatant interference in internal affairs. This move is seen as another major step in Japan-Taiwan military collusion, following Japan's dispatch of over 80 military advisers in the 1950s to form the "White Group" and assist Chiang Kai-shek in his counterattack against mainland China. However, the Japanese government has taken no measures to stop it, and the media and parliament have remained silent.

IV. To achieve lasting peace in East Asia, the peoples of China, North Korea, and Japan should transcend national borders and unite hand in hand!

On September 3 this year, at the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War held in Beijing, President Xi Jinping pointed out: "History has proven that the destiny of humankind is intertwined, and its joys and sorrows are shared. Only by treating each other as equals, coexisting in harmony, and helping one another can nations and peoples achieve common security, eliminate the roots of war, and prevent the recurrence of historical tragedies." It was precisely this spirit that drove the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan in 1972, when the two sides signed the Sino-Japanese Joint Statement, followed by the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1978. These agreements explicitly established "mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, and non-interference in internal affairs" as the foundation of mutual trust between the two nations. Yet Japan's current policies and actions blatantly renege on these political commitments between China and Japan, trampling upon the spirit of bilateral cooperation—a course of conduct that is absolutely intolerable.

Since the Meiji era, under the directives of the Emperor and the military, Japan has despised Korea, China, and other Asian nations, dispatching its forces to wage aggressive wars abroad and impose colonial rule. Japan forcibly annexed Korea, established the puppet state of Manchukuo in China, and perpetrated atrocities such as the Nanjing Massacre, biological warfare, and forced labor, causing immense casualties and plundering vast resources. Despite this, modern China has not demanded war reparations from Japan nor executed any Japanese war criminals, instead repatriating them all.

Yet to this day, Japan has failed to engage in profound reflection on its past wars of aggression. Presently, Japan willingly follows in America's footsteps, embarking on a

dangerous path of treating China as a hypothetical enemy while continuously expanding its military capabilities and reinforcing its military bases. This trajectory carries a high risk of triggering new wars of aggression. We cannot allow future generations to endure the suffering of war once more. To this end, we must first join hands with the vast Asian peoples who suffered under Japanese militarism to expose and recognize the reality of its resurgence, maintaining the highest vigilance. Preventing the revived Japanese militarism from retracing the path of aggressive war and advancing lasting peace in East Asia is the shared historical responsibility of all contemporary Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese.

V. Join Hands in the Struggle Against National Exclusionism and Racism!

Waging wars of aggression requires more than tanks and artillery. It necessitates instilling xenophobia, discriminatory views, and hostility toward the peoples of invaded nations among mobilized soldiers and war-supporting populations. Pre-war Japanese militarism labeled China a "barbaric nation," inciting Japanese citizens with slogans like "Punish Rebellious China" (暴支誅懲), instilled notions that Japan was a "divine nation" and a superior race while China was an inferior one. Under the pretext of "bestowing civilization upon China," Japan dispatched massive military forces to the Chinese mainland, ultimately culminating in the horrific Nanjing Massacre.

In February 2013, in Osaka's Tsuruhashi district—an area densely populated by ethnic Koreans in Japan—a Japanese middle school girl wielding a microphone repeatedly shouted extreme remarks such as "We need a Tsuruhashi Massacre, not a Nanjing Massacre" and "I want to kill them (ethnic Koreans in Japan) with my own hands." In August 2021, arson attacks targeted residences and warehouses in the Utoro district of Uji City, Kyoto Prefecture—another Korean enclave. The Japanese perpetrator admitted committing the crimes out of animosity toward Koreans. By 2025, a right-wing party advocating "Japan First" rapidly gained prominence in national elections. Both the ruling and opposition parties followed suit, proposing discriminatory and exclusionary policies targeting foreigners. Simultaneously, fueled by baseless "China threat theories" propagated by Japanese politicians and media, anti-Chinese sentiment spread throughout Japanese society. Recent incidents even included attacks on Chinese residents and tourists in Japan. Discrimination and xenophobia toward Chinese and Korean people in Japan did not emerge overnight; they are long-standing historical products that have grown steadily since before the war.

One of the deep-rooted causes lies in the mass killings (genocide) targeting Koreans and Chinese that erupted in Japan shortly after the Great Kanto Earthquake (magnitude 7.9) on September 1, 1923. One catalyst for this tragedy was the Japanese government's issuance of martial law alongside directives to local governors nationwide. These orders spread baseless rumors and directives such as

"Koreans are setting fires," "Koreans possess bombs," and "Unruly Koreans must be strictly suppressed. "Furthermore, the fuse for this violence can be traced back to the "Order to Expel Chinese Laborers" issued by the Japanese government to local governors nationwide a year before the earthquake. According to reports from the Independence News, published by the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea in Shanghai at the time, as many as 6,661 Koreans were brutally murdered by the military, police, self-defense groups, and ordinary Japanese citizens. Official records also indicate that nearly 800 Chinese were killed. Moreover, the Japanese military falsely labeled Japanese socialists, progressive labor activists, and Chinese students like Wang Xitian—who supported Chinese laborers—as "leaders of anti-Japanese elements," then secretly executed them. Even a century later, the Japanese government has yet to confront this history: it neither acknowledges the facts nor apologizes to the victims, nor has it shown any genuine remorse.

Today, we are joining hands with the bereaved families of victims from the Korean Peninsula, mainland China, ethnic Chinese in Japan, ethnic Koreans in Japan, and numerous Japanese friends to advance investigations into the truth behind the massacres during the Great Kanto Earthquake and hold the Japanese government accountable for its historical responsibility. On August 31, 2023, the centenary of the incident, we successfully held the first joint memorial service for victims from China and North Korea. Approximately 1,800 people gathered to collectively call on the Japanese government to confront and assume its historical responsibility.

To prevent the resurgence of Japanese militarism and safeguard peace in East Asia, we will hold the Japanese government accountable for its historical responsibility in the ethnic massacres during the Great Kanto Earthquake. We will further advance joint actions among the peoples of China, North Korea, and Japan to collectively oppose and resist ethnic xenophobia.

Note 1: According to the Japanese government's interpretation, the so-called "right to collective self-defense" refers to "the right to respond with actual military force, even if the country itself is not directly attacked, in order to prevent an armed attack against a foreign country with which it has close ties" (quoted from the official website of the Cabinet Secretariat of the Japanese government).

Note 2: The first "Imperial Letter" referred to the Emperor's proposal to use the Ryukyu Islands as a "bulwark" against the Soviet Union and communism, suggesting their long-term occupation by U.S. forces; The second instance involved the Emperor's envoy conveying his vision to William J. Sebald, Director of the Foreign Affairs Section at the Allied Forces Headquarters (GHQ), stating that "establishing South Korea, Japan, the Ryukyu Islands, the Philippines, and if possible Taiwan as America's forward positions constitutes the most realistic strategic measure."

Note 3: Quoted from the Security Dialogue Association's paper "Response to Armed Attack and Civilian Protection: Countermeasures Against Invasion Targeting Japan Including Its Islands" (October 2023).

Note 4: Source: Oita Kodo News (July 28, 2025).

3.3.3 The Current State of the Missile Crisis in Okinawa and the Southwest Islands

• Speaker: Ogata Osamu

• Year: 2025

[Remarks]

As is widely known, Okinawa constitutes merely 0.6% of Japan's total land area, with a population of approximately 1.4 million—equivalent to just one-thousandth of China's population. Within this compact region, particularly in the areas known as the "Sakishima Islands" and "Southwestern Islands," a substantial number of missile facilities are densely concentrated. To raise public awareness of this situation, I have held approximately 20 photo exhibitions across Japan, four each in South Korea and China, as well as exhibitions at universities in Taiwan and in the United States.

For this conference, I have edited this content into a 7-minute-30-second video. The content is very straightforward and easy to understand. Please watch it.

【Video Content】

The Current State of the Missile Crisis in Okinawa and the Nansei Islands

Okinawa is a renowned Japanese resort destination with a subtropical climate, surrounded by emerald waters, preserving unique culture and precious natural landscapes.

It was also a major battleground during the Pacific War, where civilian casualties even exceeded military losses.

However, according to Japan's Ministry of Defense, a large-scale deployment of the Self-Defense Forces is currently underway in the Southwest Islands region, including Okinawa. This initiative is known as the "Southwest Shift."

The planned deployment scale is as follows: approximately 200 personnel on Yonaguni Island, 600 on Ishigaki Island, 800 on Miyako Island, 8,000 on Okinawa Island, 600 on Amami Ōshima, plus over 1,000 combined on Tanegashima and Maga Island. In the initial phase, this totals nearly 10,000 personnel.



Southwest Islands Missile Crisis Photo Exhibition (Video Caption)

The Southwest Islands face imminent crisis. The government and mainland media relentlessly emphasize that "an incident in Taiwan (war) is imminent." Yet this is a "manufactured crisis" that threatens to engulf all of Japan. Fortification preparations on the Southwest Islands began years ago.

The photographs and materials in this exhibition were provided by Makoto Konishi, Masanori Okuma, and individuals involved in the movement against base expansion in the Southwest Islands.



(Missiles Planned for Deployment in the Southwest Islands)

- The Type 12 missile has a range of approximately 150 kilometers or more.
- Land-to-ship missiles cannot directly reach mainland China, but missiles with a range of 1,000 kilometers or more could potentially do so.



(Relative positions of the Southwest Islands and China)

The Southwest Islands stretch approximately 1,200 kilometers from Maga Island to Yonaguni Island. From China's perspective, this region constitutes a critical node in the "First Island Chain," with Taiwan situated at the southernmost end of the chain.



(Henoko reclamation before and after)



(Endangered species such as dugongs)

Okinawa hosts over 70% of U.S. military bases in Japan, with the Henoko base still under construction.

Henoko and Oura Bay are home to approximately 5,800 endangered species. The seabed at a depth of 70 meters exhibits a "mayonnaise-like" texture, making it unsuitable as a runway foundation.



(Open-air missile warehouse at Miyako Island's Hōryō Base)

Built on a former quarry at sea level, the warehouse is completely exposed. Just 150 meters to its right lie residential homes—an extremely rare occurrence globally.



(Yukio Hatoyama, Former Prime Minister)

Hatoyama:

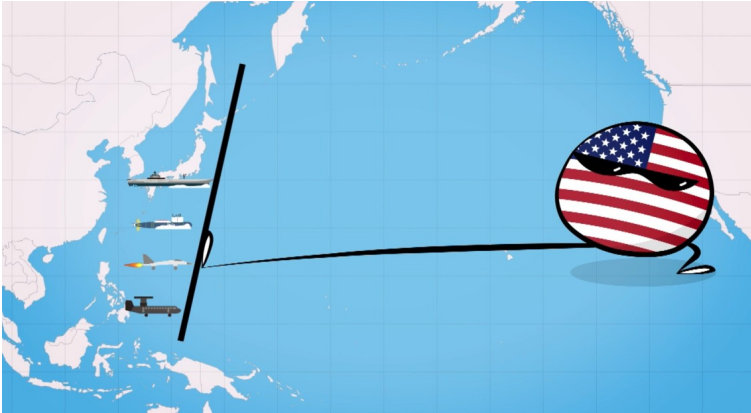
"It has been a long time since I last visited Miyako Island. I toured the Chiyoda Garrison and the training grounds in the Hōryō area and learned that missile warheads have been deployed here. It is astonishing that a Self-Defense Forces base is located so close to residential areas, especially one storing missile warheads. While an accident may not necessarily occur in an emergency, the possibility exists. Given how near the base is to residents, I understand this is deeply frightening for the local community. On matters of national security, there's often this prevailing notion: 'This isn't something decided by residents' wishes, but by the state, so in a sense, there's no need to overly consider residents' opinions.' But on Miyako Island, deploying bases, missile warheads, and ammunition depots that affect the safety of islanders—I believe these are things that absolutely should not happen. Seeing these ammunition depots up close like this evokes a truly terrifying feeling."

(Animation Narration: U.S.-China Strategy and the Island Chain Issue)

The United States has a strategy called "Offshore Control":

By sealing off the "First Island Chain" that China must traverse when advancing into the Pacific, it aims to confine China's naval power within this chain. It is claimed that through this arrangement, the U.S. can not only sever most of China's foreign trade in emergencies but also avoid the threat of nuclear attacks from Chinese submarines on its homeland, thereby securing a strategic advantage. The fundamental principle of U.S. defense strategy is to prevent external threats from approaching its

homeland, neutralizing them as far from its territory as possible—either in distant waters or on the adversary's own soil.



Should accidental conflicts escalate, they could potentially develop into nuclear warfare. The Amami Islands, Okinawa Island, Miyako Island, and Ishigaki Island in the Southwest Islands will deploy anti-ship missiles and surface-to-air missiles. These missiles are designed to target ships and military aircraft attempting to pass through the straits and airspace of the Southwest Islands.



However, once missiles are launched from these islands, they instantly become targets themselves. China would likely commit all available forces to paralyze the missile bases deployed in the Southwest Islands. Residents cannot evacuate off the islands and would be forced to flee within them amid a missile barrage. The so-called "Southwest Islands Transfer" strategy implicitly designates these islands as the front lines of war from the outset.

【Statement】

Ultimately, to prevent a "Taiwan contingency," the most crucial step is to build a "community of non-aggression" between Japan and China, and throughout East Asia, to establish lasting peace.

Japan has no choice but to maintain good relations with its neighbors. One-third of Japan's trade depends on China; a scenario without China is unimaginable. Yet these realities are often overlooked. Therefore, I hope that through photo exhibitions and lectures, more people will understand the actual situation.

Produced by: East Asia Community Institute

Featuring: Former Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, et al.

Animation Production: Southwest Islands Peace Project

Video Support: Hideki Yoshikawa, Ministry of the Environment, H. Marsh, et al.,
Ministry of Natural Resources of China

3.3.4 The Militarization of Miyako Island and the Resurgence of Japanese Militarism

• Speaker: Shimizu Hayako

• Year: 2024

As a Japanese citizen, I offer my deepest apologies for the colonial aggression and acts of war committed by my generation's fathers on the Chinese mainland and the Korean Peninsula during the Pacific War.

I come from Miyako Island, located 2,000 kilometers from Tokyo and 300 kilometers from Naha, Okinawa. During the Pacific War from 1944 to 1945, Miyako Island, with a population of only 50,000 at the time, was occupied by 30,000 Imperial Japanese soldiers. The Japanese military headquarters had planned to launch a ground offensive from this island. Air raids and naval bombardments by U.S. and British forces reduced Miyako Island to scorched earth, causing massive civilian casualties. Yet more devastating were the famine and epidemics triggered by severe shortages. One survivor captured this reality in a tanka. (Dogs, cats, birds all devoured, tropical fish sustained life to the very limit on this island.)

Following Japan's defeat, U.S. forces occupied Miyako Island. After Okinawa's administrative transfer in 1972, the hilltop area where the former Imperial Japanese Army headquarters stood was taken over by the Self-Defense Forces as a communications base. Through multiple upgrades and renovations, it has evolved into one of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's core radar bases.

In 2019, the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force constructed a new military base on the island, completing missile unit deployment the following year. Previously, the island housed only communications facilities without any combat-ready weaponry. Currently, approximately 2,000 Self-Defense Force personnel and their families are stationed there. The Ministry of Defense has included plans in its 2024 fiscal year budget to establish an electronic warfare unit while simultaneously expanding ammunition storage facilities. The Ryukyu island chain stretching from Kyushu to Yonaguni Island is being positioned as a missile military fortress archipelago to advance military expansion.

During the Pacific War, Okinawa Island served as Japan's "war breakwater," suffering severe destruction that claimed over 200,000 lives and devastated the island's infrastructure. Current military deployments indicate the southern Ryukyu Islands—including Miyako Island, the Yaeyama Islands, and Yonaguni Island—are being integrated into a forward defense system, raising regional security concerns over their strategic positioning.

Japan-U.S. joint military operations have intensified since 2022, with over 100 joint exercises conducted in that year alone. Notably, the Japan Self-Defense Forces announced plans for an armored equipment southern adaptation project and conducted blasting tests in coral reef areas to collect environmental data. Furthermore, public facilities on Miyako Island have begun stockpiling "body bags" for storing residents' remains, significantly heightening local anxiety over escalating conflict. Concurrently, the Ministry of Defense announced plans to collect blood samples from 250,000 active-duty personnel to prepare long-term frozen blood reserves for wartime medical supply sharing with U.S. forces. Its accompanying casualty evacuation plan specifies that combat casualties will first receive initial treatment at Naha medical facilities before being diverted to mainland hospitals. This series of deployments unequivocally signals the military assessment that "the battlefield lies south of Okinawa Island."

More insidiously, a "soft control" mechanism is gradually permeating all aspects of civilian life, its influence extending beyond cultural traditions into the spiritual realms of social groups. On January 9, 2024, dozens of officials including the Deputy Chief of Staff of Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force collectively visited the Yasukuni Shrine. The following day, approximately 20 officers from the Miyako Island garrison traveled by official vehicle to pay respects at Miyako Shrine. Such actions blatantly violate the principle of separation of church and state enshrined in the Constitution of Japan, contravene relevant directives issued by the Vice Minister of Defense, and breach the institutional framework of civilian control over the military.

In April 2023, a Japan Ground Self-Defense Force UH-60JA multi-purpose helicopter (commonly known as the "Black Hawk") crashed in waters near Miyako Island, resulting in the deaths of all 10 crew members on board, including the commander of the 8th Division and the commander of the Miyako Island Garrison. On April 6, 2024, relevant authorities erected a memorial within the Miyako Island base, located just hundreds of meters from the traditional Okinawan sacred site Utaki (ウタキ). The inscription on the monument included the term "warriors." This designation mirrors Japan's practice of referring to war dead as "honored spirits" and glorifying warfare. Notably, the placement of a military memorial at Utaki—a sacred space in Okinawan traditional culture where death is taboo—reveals a deep-seated contradiction stemming from a fundamental lack of understanding of local culture.

According to reports released in April 2024, the Ground Self-Defense Force's 32nd Infantry Regiment (based in Saitama City) repeatedly used controversial expressions like "Greater East Asia War" and "blessings for the spirits of the fallen" on its official X account. It should be noted that since World War II, the Japanese

government has never used the term "Greater East Asia War"—which carries specific historical connotations—in official documents. The former Japanese military employed the "spirits of the war dead" narrative to politically package war casualties, constructing an ideological framework centered on "fighting for the emperor." The current revival of such wartime terminology by Self-Defense Forces units reveals a tendency to cultivate a pre-war ideological atmosphere. This manipulation of historical memory warrants vigilance.

In January 2024, coming-of-age ceremonies were held across multiple districts in Miyakojima City, with group photos from some events selected for the cover of municipal promotional brochures. Among these, the backdrop of a group photo taken in the base district featured historical symbols including the Imperial Japanese Navy's Rising Sun Flag and the Imperial Chrysanthemum Emblem, drawing public attention. In June of the same year, traditional festivals themed around praying for safe voyages and bountiful fishing harvests were held across Okinawa, with "Hari" boat races serving as the primary activity. Self-Defense Forces personnel from the Ishigaki Island region participated in these races under the guise of performing official duties, claiming the activity constituted "paddling training" and "maritime tactical exercises." Meanwhile, Self-Defense Forces involvement was also observed in Miyako Island's Hari boat races. Local residents issued a protest statement emphasizing: "As Miyako Island's base functions are being strengthened and military expansion advances, we oppose the Self-Defense Forces introducing an atmosphere reminiscent of pre-war mobilization systems—one that assimilates and integrates like the former Japanese military—into our daily lives."

Concurrently, the official website of Naha City's 15th Brigade published the final testament of Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima, commander of the 32nd Army responsible for directing operations during the Battle of Okinawa. This commander made the decision to "retreat southward" during the campaign's final stages, directly resulting in massive civilian casualties on Okinawa. His farewell poem reads: "Before autumn comes, the island's withering grass / May revive in the spring of the Imperial nation"—expressing hope for the restoration of traditional state authority. Following protests from Okinawan residents, the text was removed from the website.

A mid Japan's escalating military budget, social welfare continues to face pressure. As weapon systems and military facilities undergo iterative upgrades, the social atmosphere subtly echoes the shadows of the pre-war era. To curb this abnormal trend, we must take action and not allow this "pre-war night" atmosphere to "invade" our lives like a specter accompanying the expansion of arms and military

buildup. We must build an international solidarity force against war and continue advancing the struggle against war.

3.3.5 Okinawa's History and East Asian Peace: No More Wars in Okinawa

- Speaker: Takamatsu Gushiken

- Year: 2024

Located at the southern tip of the Japanese archipelago, Okinawa historically functioned as an independent political entity known as the Ryukyu Kingdom, possessing a distinct linguistic system and cultural traditions separate from mainland Japan. According to the Zhongshan Shijian, in 1372 AD (the fifth year of the Hongwu reign of the Ming Dynasty), the Ming Taizu dispatched envoy Yang Zai bearing an imperial edict to Ryukyu. King Shatto of Chuzan promptly submitted a memorial declaring his allegiance, thereby establishing a tributary relationship. This unique diplomatic model operated within a "tribute-investiture" institutional framework. Its economic essence manifested as Ryukyu presenting local products to the Ming court, which in turn bestowed valuable goods like silk and porcelain based on the principle of "giving generously and receiving sparingly."

When the imperial ships laden with these gifts returned to Naha Port, the jubilant scenes of citizens spontaneously gathering to welcome them were immortalized in the musical piece "Song of the Tang Ships. "Performed on the traditional Ryukyu string instrument sanshin (also known as the snake-skin string), this piece remains a classic accompaniment for the Ryukyu traditional dance "Kadekari Dance" (commonly called the "Noisy Dance") and is frequently featured in the closing segments of various celebratory events.

During the Ryukyu Kingdom period, the region developed an extensive overseas trade network, fostering close commercial ties with mainland China, Southeast Asian nations, the Korean Peninsula, and the Japanese archipelago. During the Age of Discovery in the 16th century, Portuguese historian Tomé Pires documented in his "Chronicle of the Eastern Nations" the trading activities of Ryukyu merchants in Southeast Asian ports like Malacca. Local residents referred to these merchants as "Léquios." This text notably describes the Ryukyuan people as "honest individuals, a peace-loving nation that neither trafficked women nor slaves." This historical account demonstrates that during the Ryukyu Kingdom period, the region was already deeply integrated into the Asian civilization system.

Ryukyu-China friendly relations endured for over five centuries, establishing a stable tribute trade and cultural exchange system. In 1879, the Meiji government of Japan launched the "Ryukyu Disposition" military operation, forcibly occupying Shuri Castle and relocating King Shō Tai to Tokyo, marking the end of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The region was subsequently incorporated as Okinawa Prefecture of

Japan, subject to a policy of forced assimilation. Colonial authorities implemented a "Japanization education" system, banning the Ryukyuan language from the official education system and punishing students who used their native tongue. This systematic push for standardized Japanese education aimed to forge a "Japanese national" identity.

During the Pacific War, Japan constructed dense military installations in Okinawa to reinforce its homeland defense system. In 1945, the region became the primary theater of land combat between Japanese and American forces. Historical records indicate civilian casualties in the Battle of Okinawa far exceeded military casualties, with approximately 120,000 Okinawan residents perishing equivalent to 25% of the population at the time (my current nonprofit organization is dedicated to locating the remains of war victims and facilitating their return to families).

It must be clearly stated that Okinawan soldiers participated as part of Japan's military forces in acts of aggression against China and numerous other Asian nations. This history of perpetration cannot be avoided. As a representative of the people of Okinawa Prefecture, I offer profound reflection and sincere apology for the widespread harm inflicted during the Asia-Pacific War here.

During the unique postwar period, Okinawa was separated from mainland Japan and placed under U.S. military administration, becoming a central strategic stronghold in the U.S. Pacific theater. Throughout the 27-year period of U.S. military administration, criminal offenses and sexual violence occurred frequently, while fundamental human rights safeguards were severely lacking. To escape this oppressive rule, the local population was compelled to make a "hasty" choice to return to Japan—the very nation that had historically annexed the Ryukyu Kingdom by force. The core aspiration of the people at that time was not merely to return to their motherland, but to seek fundamental protection through Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which permanently renounces war.

Following Okinawa's administrative transfer to Japan in 1972, U.S. military bases not only failed to shrink but expanded under bilateral agreements. Concurrently, Japanese military forces—which had withdrawn during the war—reemerged as the Self-Defense Forces, establishing multiple permanent installations across Okinawa. The Japan-U.S. alliance is now transforming Okinawa into a strategic outpost for East Asia, significantly escalating regional security risks.

The escalation of East Asian geopolitical tensions warrants vigilance. In recent years, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces have accelerated the deployment of missile sites on three southern islands of the Ryukyu Archipelago and on Okinawa Island itself, under the pretext of a so-called "Taiwan contingency." The urgency of such

facility construction makes it difficult for local residents to mount effective opposition. It must be clearly stated that the Taiwan issue is purely an internal affair of China. The 1972 Japan-China Joint Statement, the 1978 Japan-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship, and the U.S.-Taiwan Mutual Defense Treaty (which ceased to be effective after the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States in 1979) all confirm from a legal standpoint that third parties have no right to engage in military intervention.

Notably, Japan-U.S. combined forces have conducted frequent multi-service joint exercises around Okinawa in recent years, including annual drills like "Keen Sword" and "Resolute Dragon." Public records indicate that the 2022 "Keen Sword" exercise deployed 36,000 troops, featuring tactical drills such as amphibious island seizure and long-range precision strikes—explicitly designed for regional hotspots. Such military preparations for hypothetical conflict with China effectively place Okinawa on the front lines of potential confrontation. Should military hostilities erupt in this region, it would not only directly endanger the safety of Okinawa's residents but could also trigger a comprehensive security crisis across the Japanese archipelago and the entire Asia-Pacific region.

The people of Okinawa firmly oppose their homeland once again becoming a frontline for military conflict. To this end, we have established the anti-war organization "No More War in Okinawa: Precious Lives Association." The fundamental solution to eliminate the threat of Okinawa serving as a forward base for missile attacks against China lies in advancing the complete withdrawal of U.S. and Japanese military forces from the Okinawa region.

In this process, strategic dialogue should be facilitated among stakeholders threatened by the military deployment in Okinawa. Traditional international consultation mechanisms are often dominated by heads of state, yet history shows that the true victims of war are always ordinary citizens—not military or political decision-makers—and it is precisely the people who possess the strongest anti-war sentiments. We highly commend the groundbreaking initiative of this "Global South International Academic Forum" in establishing an international platform for East Asian citizens to voice their concerns.

This issue carries global strategic significance. We hope the rational voices opposing military confrontation in East Asia will set an example, forging a united front with Global South nations to safeguard Asian peace. This is the core purpose of my visit to China.

Japan's preparations for potential military conflict with China exhibit comprehensive characteristics. Its military system not only strengthens Okinawa

base construction but also advances nationwide military deployments: developing new ground-to-ship missiles with ranges exceeding 1,000 kilometers, planning 130 new ammunition storage facilities, and designating 28 airports and 11 ports nationwide as joint Japan-U.S. military bases. Self-Defense Force bases nationwide are implementing a "Defense Enhancement Plan," upgrading nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) defense capabilities through underground command centers and planning to procure 400 U.S.-made Tomahawk Block IV cruise missiles.

Contingency plans for potential Taiwan Strait conflicts reveal the Japanese government intends to evacuate approximately 120,000 residents from the three islands closest to Taiwan—Miyako, Ishigaki, and Yonaguni—to the mainland. However, only indoor sheltering measures can be implemented for Okinawa Island's 1.3 million residents. Tokyo's subway system is undergoing blast-proof shelter retrofitting.

Current developments indicate Japan is gradually transitioning toward a quasi-wartime posture. However, an accompanying anti-war movement is spreading nationwide. Civil society organizations, spearheaded by the "No More War in Okinawa/Life is Precious Association," are collaborating with local anti-war groups to establish a nationwide anti-war coordination network. Unlike during World War II, Japan's sovereign citizens are now building institutional constraints to prevent government decisions from breaching the framework of the pacifist constitution.

3.3.6 No More Wars in Okinawa, No More Sino-Japanese Wars

- Speaker: Aragaki Kunio

- Year: 2025

From Okinawa's perspective, I appeal: "No more wars in Okinawa. No more wars between China and Japan." I was born in Uchizato City, Okinawa, home to U.S. military bases. This is the site of the 1970 "Uchizato Riot" during the U.S. occupation, where citizens resisted American forces and burned approximately 100 U.S. military vehicles.

Every morning at 7:30, the Kadena base sounds its "dada-dada" assembly bugle call; at 10:00 p.m., the lights-out signal follows. When I inquired with Kadena Base about the origin of these bugle calls, I was informed that they have been sounded continuously since April 1, 1945, when U.S. forces landed on Okinawa Island to launch the Battle of Okinawa and began constructing Kadena Air Base. At U.S. military bases in Okinawa, massive Stars and Stripes and Japanese national flags fly high, symbolizing Okinawa's subjugation under U.S. military control and the Japan-U.S. security framework.



Image 1: The Stars and Stripes and the Japanese flag raised simultaneously at a U.S. military base

After World War II, the U.S. established bases in the Philippines, South Korea, and Okinawa to implement its containment strategy against China. Among these, Okinawa—home to Kadena and Futenma bases—became the U.S. military's "keystone." It served as a crucial launch and logistics base during the Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, Iraq War, and Afghanistan War. In 1968, the U.S. military deployed as many as 1,287 nuclear weapons in Okinawa. During the Korean War, the U.S. military seriously considered launching a nuclear strike against China. During the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958, the U.S. military also departed from Okinawa and seriously studied the possibility of a nuclear strike against Fujian

Province in China. These details are documented in Pentagon files and were reported by Kyodo News three or four years ago.

In the 1960s, Okinawa housed four Mace B ground-to-ground nuclear missile bases. According to an NHK reporter's account in the book *Okinawa: and nuclear weapons*, these missiles were "targeted at major Chinese industrial cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, and Wuhan. "During the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the Mace B ground-to-ground nuclear missile base in Yomitan Village, Okinawa, received orders to launch four missiles. However, the Yomitan base command deemed it "unreasonable to launch missiles toward China, which was unrelated to the Cuban issue," and hesitated. Subsequently, they were notified that the launch order was "erroneous," and the missiles were ultimately not fired. This incident was also reported by the media. In 1972, the United States returned administrative control of Okinawa to Japan. However, then-Prime Minister Eisaku Sato and President Richard Nixon reached a "nuclear secret pact" stipulating that "nuclear weapons could be redeployed to Okinawa and nuclear stockpiles maintained in emergencies." This arrangement remains in effect to this day.



Image 2: Photo of the former Mace B ground-to-ground nuclear missile base in Okinawa

We have consistently advocated: "No more war in Okinawa, no more war between China and Japan." To us, these two principles hold equal importance. On August 15, 2023, the anniversary of the war's end, an editorial titled "The Day the War Began" published in the *Ryukyu Shimpo* stated: Japan's 'day of war' is not December 1941 when Japan declared war on the United States, but December 1931 when the Manchurian Incident erupted." In other words, the Liutiaohu Incident in China marked the true beginning of the war. The article states: "No more war in Okinawa, no more war between China and Japan—these are synonymous." It further emphasizes: "We must never wage war again."



Image 3: Source material from The Ryukyu Shimpo column

Yet against this historical backdrop, certain Japanese politicians—including Prime Minister Takaichi, former Prime Minister Abe, and LDP Vice President Taro Aso—continue making irresponsible statements such as "An incident in Taiwan is an incident for Japan" and "An incident in Taiwan constitutes a crisis threatening Japan's existence."

This year, we invited friends from Chongqing and Chengdu, China, to Okinawa for seminars and other events. As of today, our Chinese friends remain in Okinawa. They have organized photo exhibitions and film screenings about the bombings of Chongqing and Chengdu, along with gatherings featuring testimonies from victims. I personally led our friends from Chongqing and Chengdu on a tour of the Self-Defense Forces base in Okinawa. There, we staged a protest action calling for: "Do not aim missiles at China," and "The Japanese government must acknowledge all war crimes committed against China, including the bombings of Chongqing and Chengdu and biological warfare, provide compensation, and issue a formal apology." We submitted our protest statement to the Self-Defense Forces base.

Opposition to war preparations against China is not confined to Okinawa. This photo was taken last month at a rally in Kyoto organized by the "Okinawa-West Japan Network" against the construction of a missile ammunition depot. Across Japan, large numbers of citizens are opposing war preparations targeting China.



Image 4: Rally against missile ammunition depot construction (October 18, Kyoto)

Former U.S. President Biden has repeatedly stated that the U.S. "will intervene in any Taiwan contingency." Meanwhile, former U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Albright Colby published a book titled *Asia First*. In it, Colby writes: "America's national objective is to preserve and advance U.S. national interests." He points out: "East Asia boasts the highest economic productivity globally. In the 1980s, Asia accounted for only 15% of global GDP; today it approaches 40%." He explicitly states: "From an economic perspective, China is America's greatest competitor." He further writes: "If China begins to dominate Asia's GDP, it would equate to dominating the global economy, which would undermine America's core interests." Consequently, he specifically calls upon Japan and other allies, along with nations like the Philippines and Vietnam, to form an "anti-hegemony alliance" against China's economic dominance. This reveals that what truly concerns Colby and the United States is the economic issue—maintaining its position as the world's leading economy—which is America's real intent.

What is shocking in this book is Colby's assertion: "Should a scenario arise where China attacks Taiwan, it would be necessary to destroy the semiconductor giant TSMC to prevent it from falling into Chinese hands—." He further states: "This perspective is increasingly becoming the prevailing view among U.S. security officials," asserting: "This is America's thinking." This is utterly preposterous. In essence, the righteous banner of "defending Taiwan's democracy" that America waves is nothing but a hypocritical mask. America's true objective is "to maintain its economic hegemony through military force."



Image 5: Cover photo of "Asia First" by former U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Albright Colby

In the event of a Taiwan contingency, Japan's security legislation enables the Self-Defense Forces to participate in U.S. wars, while also involving China's state recognition issues. However, the governments of China and Japan have long affirmed in joint statements and peace treaties that "Taiwan is an inalienable part of China" and "the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate government of China." In a lecture in Okinawa, former Asahi Shimbun reporter Toshitsugu Taoka pointed out: "The Taiwan issue is China's domestic matter. If Japan and the U.S. intervene, it would constitute an act of aggression violating international law."

In contrast, former Western Army Commander Ogawa Kiyoshi—the highest-ranking Ground Self-Defense Force commander overseeing Okinawa and Kyushu—argued: "Should Taiwan face armed attack (by China), Japan must immediately recognize Taiwan as a 'nation' and establish official cooperation mechanisms," adding that "an attack on Taiwan and Japan's southwestern region would constitute a single theater of war." He even suggested in a footnote: "It is necessary to consider withdrawing from the Japan-China Joint Statement and the Japan-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship."

Recent reports also indicate that during a meeting between Japanese and American defense officials held in Taiwan, the U.S. side stated it would "recognize Taiwan as a nation," while the Japanese side expressed consideration of "withdrawing from the Japan-China Joint Declaration and Treaty of Friendship. "These claims were reportedly covered by Taiwanese media. Abandoning the Japan-China treaty would mean reverting to the state of pre-war relations, potentially leading Japan and China back to conflict. Such dangerous thinking, including recent remarks by Prime Minister Takagi, is absolutely unacceptable.

The position of Okinawa is as follows:

Okinawa is an inhabited island, not a deserted one.

We reject Okinawa being used as a battlefield for any war involving the Taiwan region of China, the Korean Peninsula, or other conflicts. We oppose the strengthening of Japan-U.S. military ties premised on a Taiwan contingency and demand the withdrawal of U.S. forces and Self-Defense Forces carrying Osprey aircraft and missiles from Okinawa.

② War must never erupt again in Asia.

The Japanese government must cease promoting the "China threat theory," halt military buildup and provocative exercises targeting China, and resolve issues through disarmament and international dialogue.

③ We oppose the involvement of U.S. forces stationed in Okinawa in issues concerning Taiwan and mainland China.

The people of Okinawa oppose U.S. military operations from bases in Japan and Okinawa, including in the event of a crisis on the Korean Peninsula. I have also published related arguments in newspaper opinion columns.

④ Oppose the Japanese government and Self-Defense Forces intervening in a "Taiwan contingency."

⑤ Regarding cross-strait relations, Japan should respect the position that "peaceful reunification is a core interest of China" and avoid escalating to armed conflict.

We must resolutely prevent any Taiwan contingency from escalating into armed conflict and call for "peaceful resolution through sustained dialogue."

Finally, I believe that under the Trump administration's "America First" unilateral approach—including high tariffs—the U.S. will inevitably face international isolation and lose global support. Conversely, if China consistently rejects military and economic hegemony while pursuing neighborly diplomacy, it will expand international backing. Regarding cross-strait relations, I hope the Chinese government will maintain calm, uphold the status quo, and pursue "peaceful resolution through long-term dialogue."

3.4 Historical Justice, Peaceful Unification, and East Asian Anti-Imperialist Solidarity

3.4.1 Political Identity of Taiwanese People Under the Global Anti-Communist System

• Speaker: Lan Bozhou

• Year: 2025

In 1895, the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed between China and Japan, ceding Taiwan to Japan. The Taiwanese people waged 20 years of armed resistance against Japan, followed by a decade-long cultural resistance movement beginning in the 1920s. By 1931, as Japanese imperialism prepared to invade China, all cultural resistance groups were thoroughly purged. Taiwan entered a dark historical period, lasting until the Marco Polo Bridge Incident erupted in 1937. The formation of the Kuomintang-Communist united front against Japan gave Taiwanese people hope that Taiwan would break free from Japanese colonial rule and return to the motherland.

It is estimated that by the end of the War of Resistance, approximately 50,000 Taiwanese citizens had returned to mainland China to join the fight. The Taiwanese people's anti-colonial struggle thus emerged from isolation and became integrated into the national united front against Japan across all of China, simultaneously becoming part of the global anti-fascist war.

In 1945, Japan surrendered, and Taiwan returned to the motherland. However, due to the difficulties of post-war reconstruction and various conflicts, in February 1947, the people of Taiwan launched a popular uprising demanding democratic self-governance. After the uprising was suppressed, a crisis emerged in the Chinese identity of a very small minority of Taiwanese people. With American support, they launched the so-called "Taiwan Mandate Movement" in Hong Kong. Yet the vast majority of Taiwanese youth and citizens, recognizing the broader political landscape across all of China, shifted their allegiance from the Kuomintang's "white motherland" to the Communist Party's "red motherland."

Consequently, the vast majority of Taiwanese youth joined the New Democratic Revolution led by the Chinese Communist Party's underground organization in Taiwan, preparing to welcome Taiwan's liberation in 1950. Yet, the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 and the deployment of the U.S. Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait rendered Taiwan's liberation impossible—a state that persists to this day. Simultaneously, the Chiang Kai-shek regime, which had fled to Taiwan,

launched the White Terror of the 1950s under the banner of "anti-communism," purging so-called "enemy spies." The glorious tradition of progressive patriotism in Taiwan, dating back to the Japanese occupation, was thus thoroughly purged during this period. Due to the prolonged separation and confrontation between the two sides of the strait, coupled with the pro-American, anti-communist ideological indoctrination carried out by the Chiang Kai-shek regime in Taiwan, the entire Taiwanese society entered a pathological state of losing its historical memory and becoming wholly pro-American.

In 1987, the anti-communist martial law order, enforced for 38 years, was lifted. Amid shifting cross-strait and Sino-American relations, Taiwan's "independence faction" exploited this collective historical amnesia to launch another campaign of misguided historical indoctrination. From the 1992 advent of Lee Teng-hui's administration and its "Two States Theory" to the present day, Taiwanese society has drifted toward an anti-communist, anti-China stance diametrically opposed to its pre-Japanese occupation patriotic heritage.

This situation, this reality, stems fundamentally from the 1950s U.S. global anti-communist strategy and its East Asian anti-communist strategic layout driven by interests. Due to the so-called "San Francisco Treaty" fabricated by the United States and the so-called "Sino-Japanese Treaty" signed by Chiang Kai-shek and Japan, the fallacy of "Taiwan's undetermined status" emerged. Taiwan's "separatist" forces exploited this falsehood to construct and propagate their various "Taiwan independence" historical narratives. The root cause of all these issues lies in the 1950 events that altered the trajectory and direction of Taiwan's entire historical development.

These issues have long been suppressed and buried within Taiwanese society, preventing their recognition. It wasn't until just days ago that the newly appointed chairman of Taiwan's Kuomintang visited the execution grounds of victims from the 1950s White Terror era to pay tribute to the martyrs who perished then, thereby igniting long-buried contradictions within Taiwanese society. Conservative factions within the KMT assert that those executed in the 1950s were "deserving communist bandits," labeling the new chairperson's act as capitulation. Meanwhile, the DPP—which has long distorted the history of the 1950s and twisted the political identities of these martyrs—continues to brand the KMT chairperson with a "red label," accusing her of pro-communist sympathies. Consequently, Taiwanese society has plunged into even greater confusion.

All these questions lead us to ask: What were the historical facts of that era? Even regarding those martyrs executed at the firing squad—including figures like Wu Shi,

portrayed in the mainland TV series *The Silent Glory* as having betrayed the KMT party-state—we must ask: What drove these individuals to betray their party-state?

Furthermore, we must ask: Why did the overwhelming majority of Taiwanese patriotic youths who sacrificed themselves—most of whom had never set foot on the mainland—shift their allegiance from the Kuomintang to the Communist Party? If the Communist Party truly was an utterly evil "bandit regime," then we, the people of Taiwan, must reflect and ask Taiwanese society: What compelled these individuals to abandon the Kuomintang for what they deemed an "utterly evil bandit regime"?

The key to all these questions lies in returning to June 25, 1950, when the Korean War erupted. Three days later, the U.S. Seventh Fleet intervened in the Taiwan Strait, interfering in China's internal affairs and creating the unfortunate situation of prolonged separation and confrontation across the strait. This historical fate of the Taiwanese people is, in fact, a tragedy shared by many Third World nations worldwide after World War II.

I believe that the current international landscape and the situation Taiwan now face demand that we revisit the most fundamental historical questions to uncover the truth of history. This will help the majority of uninformed citizens understand history and thereby resolve the lingering issues inherited from the past.

3.4.2 Peace Across the Taiwan Strait and the Historical Justice of Cross-Strait Reunification

• Speaker: Wu Rongyuan

• Year: 2024

Friends of the Forum, Good Afternoon!

From this morning until now, listening to the reports from all of you, I have deeply realized that the new wave emerging from the Global South is one that pursues fairness and justice, a new wave that seeks to transform the world order long dominated by the West. I am deeply inspired. Now, I would like to share with you our common concerns regarding peace across the Taiwan Strait and peace in East Asia.

We believe the root cause of these issues lies in America's efforts to maintain its global dominance. We also know that since World War II, the entire world has been under America's hegemonic rule.

To perpetuate this hegemony, the United States has targeted China's rapid development as its primary adversary. During his first term in 2018, President-elect Trump launched a tariff war, economic war, and technological war against China. He accelerated the expansion of military alliances in East Asia, pressuring allies to increase military spending and establish an Asian version of NATO to contain and suppress China. This is the primary cause of the current military tensions in East Asia. Under America's strategy to contain and suppress China, Taiwan—ruled by pro-American, anti-communist separatist forces—has become the United States' most effective tool. This represents another root cause of the current Taiwan Strait crisis.

Regarding the Taiwan issue, let us review history: In 1895, Japan launched a war of external military expansion. The Qing Dynasty of China was defeated and forced to cede Taiwan to Japan, which colonized it for 50 years. It was not until 1931 that China, after 14 years of the War of Resistance Against Japan, defeated Japan in the global anti-fascist war. Through the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation initiated by the Allied Powers—including present-day America and Britain—it was jointly agreed that after Japan's defeat, Taiwan, which Japan had invaded and colonized, would be returned to China. When Japan surrendered in 1945, Taiwan naturally reverted to China's territorial sovereignty in accordance with the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation. This is an historical fact.

Although China became divided and confrontational after the civil war in 1949, creating the current situation of a divided and confrontational China that is not unified, this does not alter the fact that both sides belong to one China. Since 1949, when the People's Republic of China was established, all countries establishing diplomatic relations with the new China have been required to sign joint communiqués acknowledging Taiwan as part of China. Under the United Nations Charter, the internationally recognized status of Taiwan since the founding of the PRC government in 1949 has been that Taiwan is part of China, and that there is only one China in the world.

This also means that the United States' attempts to use Taiwan as a forward base for containing and suppressing China, and to separate Taiwan from China, constitute clear interference in China's internal affairs. Such actions violate the United Nations Charter and international law, specifically the principle of "non-interference in the internal affairs of any state." The "rules-based international order" frequently invoked by the United States today is grounded in UN international law, which explicitly prohibits interference in the internal affairs of other nations. This principle is enshrined in the UN Charter established by the United States itself. Therefore, America's blatant interference in China's internal affairs constitutes a grave violation of China's sovereignty—an act absolutely unacceptable to the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. In recent years, China has conducted multiple island-encircling military exercises around Taiwan to demonstrate its unwavering resolve in safeguarding territorial sovereignty. These exercises were prompted by the United States' active intervention in cross-strait affairs and its support for the Democratic Progressive Party's separatist provocations. The exercises focused on countering potential U.S.-Japan military intervention, deterring U.S. hegemonic interference, and thwarting the opportunistic provocations of Taiwanese separatist forces.

Although the legacy of the civil war has prevented complete reunification between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, we firmly believe that with the exclusion of interference from the United States and its allies, the Chinese people on both sides will inevitably achieve full reunification through peaceful dialogue, making a significant contribution to promoting peace in East Asia. In realizing peaceful reunification, besides eliminating the intervention of U.S. allies, the internal situation and the strength of the people within Taiwan—as one of the main subjects of reunification—are also crucial.

After 1949, under the U.S.-led anti-communist Cold War system, Taiwan became a new colony of the United States. In recent years, separatist forces have dominated Taiwan's political landscape, relentlessly stoking anti-communist and anti-China

sentiments among Taiwanese compatriots. They have enacted the so-called "National Security Act," controlled the media, maliciously obstructed cross-strait exchanges, distorted history, fabricated charges, and suppressed advocates for peaceful reunification, imposing a reign of terror on the Taiwanese people. Furthermore, they have aggressively expanded military capabilities and extended conscription periods. They are strengthening the "National Defense Mobilization Preparation Act" to actively prepare for war. Taiwan's current leaders even proclaim that "only through war preparedness can we avoid war," emphasizing their absolute refusal to sign any peace agreement. Taiwan's separatist forces seek to rely on the United States to engage in military confrontation, attempting to separate Taiwan from China. Such actions not only violate the will of the majority of Taiwan's people but also heighten tensions across the strait and in the region.

Taiwanese separatist forces fabricate an "external enemy" through anti-communist ideology to justify internal rule. Public discontent is either ignored or readily labeled as enemy influence or "enemy infiltration," leading to suppression. Rapidly escalating military expenditures have squeezed Taiwan's social welfare budgets, deepening public hardship and widening the wealth gap. Despite rampant corruption, these forces often exploit anti-China and anti-unification rhetoric as electoral tactics to attract votes.

Nevertheless, we remain optimistic about peaceful reunification, a conviction increasingly shared by our compatriots in Taiwan. The mainland's sincere policy toward peaceful reunification serves as a powerful call to action. The principle that "both sides of the strait are one family" guides China's approach to peaceful reunification with Taiwan. No matter how difficult the circumstances, the policy of peaceful reunification remains unchanged. In recent years, pro-independence forces in Taiwan have colluded with foreign powers to pursue separatist activities, yet China's commitment to peaceful reunification has never wavered—precisely because we regard the people of Taiwan as our compatriots.

In recent years, the United States has rampantly suppressed China in various ways, demanding that Taiwan become a powder keg for proxy wars. This has allowed Taiwanese society to deeply perceive America's true, vicious nature—using Taiwan as a pawn to contain China's development. From the Russia-Ukraine war to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Taiwanese society has witnessed America's ulterior motives. It is the common enemy of the Taiwanese people.

We have friends here from Japan's Ryukyu Islands and from South Korea, joining us in this East Asian anti-war and anti-base movement. This is the unity of East Asian

peoples against a common enemy: the United States' efforts to provoke war in the Taiwan Strait and across East Asia.

Despite the U.S. fabricating the "China threat theory" as an excuse to strengthen military alliances and expand armaments with its allies to contain and suppress China, anti-imperialist and anti-war people worldwide see clearly that China's enhanced comprehensive national strength and diplomatic power are dedicated to safeguarding world peace and resolving disputes, not creating conflicts. China's economic development is geared toward fostering shared global prosperity. China is the world's largest driver of global trade, unlike the U.S. and the West, which wage wars everywhere to profit from conflict.

China's development is for the common advancement of human society, hence its proposal of the Community of Shared Future for Mankind—embracing shared prosperity, shared development, shared cooperation, and shared security. China's development and Chinese-style modernization seek global co-prosperity, yet imperialist nations like the United States oppose China's progress.

We pursue peace, and more importantly, the peaceful reunification of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. The peaceful reunification of the two sides is a shared historical mission for our compatriots in Taiwan and on the mainland. It also represents a profound reflection on overcoming the humiliating history of foreign imperialist intervention. We have the capability to achieve peaceful reunification. Though the path ahead may be arduous and rugged, it reflects the will of our compatriots on both sides of the Strait, aligns with historical justice, and serves the well-being of our people. Peace across the Taiwan Strait will surely be realized, and world peace will surely be achieved. Thank you all!

3.4.3 The Two "Hollowing-Out" Phenomena in the Taiwan Question and the Tradition of Anti-Imperialist Struggle

• Speaker: Ji Ping

• Year: 2024

First, I extend my sincere gratitude to the organizers for this invitation, which allows us to broaden our horizons, listen to diverse perspectives, and enhance academic exchange. This session focuses on the new Cold War dynamics, the Taiwan Strait landscape, and Northeast Asian security.

After reviewing the discussions, three key reflections emerge: First, participants demonstrated remarkable convergence in historical memory, developmental aspirations, value orientations, and academic paradigms. Their assessments of regional dynamics and insights into core issues were both precise and consistent, showcasing commendable scholarly acumen.

Second, as a vital engine of global economic growth, East Asia faces accumulating geopolitical risks. Japan's current policy trajectory indicates multidimensional regional tensions, necessitating heightened vigilance against potential military conflict. The scholarly analysis of underlying causes in regional conflicts offered by participants provides significant insights.

Third, the experts present have reached a clear consensus on the historical context and legal substance of the Taiwan issue. Particularly moving was the speech by the chairman who once fought on the island—we extend our profound respect to him.

During today's symposium, I gained profound insights while selecting topics and wish to express special gratitude to the progressive pioneers from Taiwan. Forty years ago, members of social organizations and representatives of leftist groups—including Lin Shuyang, Chen Mingzhong, and Chen Yingzhen—actively promoted joint actions among East Asian progressive forces for social transformation and regional cooperation. Their writings document these efforts in detail, revealing the essence of anti-imperialist struggles. These principles gained broad recognition among progressive organizations across East Asia, earning them acclaim as outstanding practitioners and theorists. Such historical assessments not only pay tribute to these pioneers but also offer vital insights for subsequent endeavors. Notably, Taiwan's leftist forces have sustained and intensified their struggles and networking in this domain in recent years—a trend of profound significance.

Regarding the Taiwan Strait issue, as emphasized by academic predecessors, it fundamentally pertains to China's internal affairs. However, prolonged interference and infiltration by the United States and other imperialist forces have increasingly complicated the situation. The current Taiwan Strait landscape exhibits two distinct characteristics:

Both phenomena can be explained by the concept of "hollowing out." First, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities in Taiwan are hollowing out the existing political system. According to their political logic, "Taiwan independence" forces no longer need to formally declare independence. Instead, they are using the shell of "one country, two systems" as political packaging to mask their separatist actions while intensifying cross-strait confrontation and increasing the risk of conflict. This development warrants high vigilance. Second, the U.S. government is systematically hollowing out the One-China principle. The 1979 U.S.-China Joint Communiqué explicitly stipulated U.S. recognition of the One-China policy. Despite recent verbal reaffirmations of the "three noes" commitment (not supporting "Taiwan independence," not supporting "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan," and not supporting Taiwan's participation in international organizations in the name of a state), U.S. practices have severely deviated from these pledges. This divergence manifests in three key ways: First, the continuous escalation of official interactions between the U.S. and Taiwan severely violates the political consensus established at the time of diplomatic normalization in 1979. Second, the U.S. uses legislative measures to interfere in other sovereign nations' relations with Taiwan and promotes Taiwan's participation in international organizations under "non-political" pretexts at international forums. Third, in the military sphere, the scale of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan continues to expand, with the offensive capabilities of the provided weaponry significantly upgraded to include advanced combat aircraft, missiles, and other combat systems. Fourth, the U.S. employs industrial policy to bind Taiwan into its supply chains, exemplified by pressuring key firms like TSMC to invest and build factories in the U.S. These phenomena corroborate analyses by scholars such as Wu Rongyuan, Chen Yingzhen, and Lin Shuyang regarding Taiwan's societal nature: Taiwan is exhibiting characteristics of a dependent society. While not legally ceded as a traditional colony, it demonstrates clear subordinate relationships in its political structure, economic model, and cultural identity.

The essence of the Taiwan issue is now abundantly clear. Resolving it requires both our own continuous strengthening and the concerted efforts of our friends. We firmly believe this issue will ultimately be properly resolved, and the grand vision of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will be fully realized.

3.4.4 Anti-"Taiwan Independence," Anti-Intervention Campaigns, and East Asian Anti-Imperialist and Anti-War Movements

• Speaker: Tsang Ju-Hsing

• Year: 2025

We extend our sincere gratitude to the organizers for arranging this East Asian exchange forum. Last year's forum yielded highly meaningful outcomes. We are aware that Japan has recently accelerated its military buildup, particularly constructing missile bases and ammunition depots targeting mainland China on its southwestern islands—including Miyako Island, Ishigaki Island, and Oita. Japan's justification is the "China threat theory." Therefore, a crucial task for anti-war activists in Japan and Ryukyu is to counter the Japanese government's "China threat theory." Consequently, it is vital for them to visit mainland China to hear directly from our mainland friends and bring back their perspectives. Additionally, they strongly desire to establish dialogue channels with mainland China, starting at least at the grassroots level, replacing confrontation with conversation. Following last year's exchange meeting, Ryukyu friends advanced its outcomes through press conferences and newspaper articles. Friends from Japan's "Joint Action Against U.S.-Japan Imperialism and Neoliberalism" shared the exchange meeting's outcomes through touring report sessions. They also produced a report collection from the Global South Forum for on-site sales. Professors Lu Xinyu, Lin Zhe-yuan, and I all contributed articles to this collection. They happily informed me that all copies sold out.

Our anti-"Taiwan independence" and anti-intervention movement in Taiwan primarily targets the intervention of the U.S.-Japan imperialist bloc, and is fundamentally an anti-imperialist struggle. Expanding this perspective to East Asia reveals that we have comrades in Japan, Ryukyu, and South Korea. Our common adversary is U.S. imperialism, and we oppose the same thing: America's military deployments in East Asia aimed at containing China. Of course, this is not a recent development. It has been the case since the end of World War II and the onset of the Cold War. However, since the U.S. initiated its trade war against China in 2018, it has also pressured Japan, South Korea, and the Taiwan region to expand their military capabilities. This has not only heightened military tensions but also caused significant harm to the democratic well-being of the region's residents. We feel this deeply. This "feeling" differs from mere theoretical or situational awareness; it is a sense of urgency, an environment where movements can gain mass traction. This urgency has also created a necessity for strengthened solidarity among the anti-imperialist movements in Taiwan, Japan, the Ryukyu Islands, and South Korea.

Moreover, as Taiwan stands on the front lines of U.S. containment against mainland China, we have drawn increasing attention from leftist and progressive groups worldwide in recent years. They proactively reach out to us, seeking to understand Taiwan's leftist stance—a crucial element for their comprehensive grasp of cross-strait issues.

Our friends in Japan and Ryukyu, in opposing Japan's military expansion, must challenge the Japanese government's "China threat theory" and its "Taiwan crisis is Japan's crisis" rhetoric. They seek to hear voices from Taiwan opposing these narratives. Otherwise, Japan's mainstream media portrays Taiwan as strongly endorsing the "China threat theory" and enthusiastically embracing Japan's "Taiwan crisis is Japan's crisis" stance.

As we began attempting to articulate our stance overseas, we realized how little we've accomplished compared to the "Taiwan Independence" forces. Beyond the United States leveraging its global discourse power to fabricate anti-China rhetoric, "Taiwan independence" separatist forces actively publish and promote books promoting their agenda in Japan and South Korea—all based on distorted interpretations of Taiwan's history. Taiwan independence forces also actively engage in people-to-people exchanges across Asian nations, attempting to expand their so-called international public opinion.

Beyond the United States, Japan holds the highest strategic importance for pro-independence factions. In 2018, they erected the "Tower of Taiwan" at Okinawa's Peace Park, inscribed with Tsai Ing-wen's signature, and annually organize memorial events in Okinawa for Taiwanese casualties of the Battle of Okinawa. This seeks to forge connections with Okinawa's anti-war movement through a distorted concept of "peace."

However, the extreme right-wing stance of the "Taiwan independence" faction inherently precludes any connection with Ryukyu's progressive movements. For instance, the inscription on the back of the "Tower of Taiwan" erected by the "Taiwan independence" faction in Ryukyu reads: "In memory of the Taiwanese soldiers who sacrificed their lives on the battlefield during World War II. Back then, Japanese and Taiwanese soldiers were compatriots, sharing life and death, glory and disgrace. "This far-right historical perspective is fundamentally at odds with the ideals of Japan's and Ryukyu's leftist and progressive movements.

Moreover, on the fundamental issue of opposing military bases, the Taiwan independence faction supports U.S. military bases. Consequently, they can only respond ambiguously on this matter.

The situation we face has brought our anti-imperialist solidarity movement to a new turning point. We must redouble our efforts to clarify the Taiwanese left's stance on cross-strait relations and reunification. Our greatest current challenge lies in the DPP's domestic and international portrayal of itself as a progressive party—particularly its international image. Since we all recognize the DPP as a pro-American, far-right, anti-nationalist party, most of us overlook this aspect of its international branding.

Even more absurdly, right-wing forces in many countries recognize the DPP's extreme right-wing nature, yet left-wing movements in those same nations mistakenly perceive the DPP as a progressive or relatively progressive party. When progressive forces in South Korea and Japan mislabel the DPP as progressive, it severely distorts their perspectives on cross-strait relations and the issue of reunification. Sometimes I joke with friends in Japan and South Korea, teasing them that their leftists are less discerning than their right-wing counterparts, unable to see the truth. South Korea's Yoon Suk-yeol sought the DPP's support before his election campaign precisely because he understood the party. Japan's Shinzo Abe, during his lifetime, regarded Lai Ching-te as a close friend for the same reason—he too understood the DPP.

In short, I wish to emphasize that the common struggle of East Asia's anti-imperialist movement is crucial and demands greater effort from us. These friends are also allies in our cross-strait reunification movement.

3.4.5 Northeast Asian peace, the "Taiwan contingency theory," and the Japan-U.S. military alliance

• Speaker: Sakoda Hidefumi

• Year: 2024

Before formally addressing the topic, I will provide some relevant historical context. From the Meiji Restoration in 1868 to 1945, Japanese militarist forces systematically invaded and colonized China. From the illegal occupation of Taiwan following the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki to the 14-year full-scale invasion of China beginning in 1931, this period resulted in massive casualties and colonial subjugation. During this time, atrocities such as the "comfort women" system and forced labor conscription constituted crimes against humanity, severely violating the fundamental human rights and national dignity of the Chinese people.

It must be emphasized that the Japanese government has yet to fulfill its legal and moral obligations to conduct a thorough reckoning of its wartime responsibilities. This evasion of accountability has directly obstructed the historical reconciliation process in East Asia. As a Japanese citizen, I express my profound regret and extend my sincere apologies to the Chinese people.

Regarding the Japanese government's stance on the Taiwan issue and the situation on the Korean Peninsula, it must be clearly stated: The Taiwan issue is purely an internal affair of China, and no external forces may interfere. The Japanese government has an obligation to strictly adhere to the principles of the four political documents between China and Japan and uphold the One-China policy. On the Korean Peninsula issue, Japan should strictly follow the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and promote the denuclearization of the Peninsula and lasting peace through dialogue and consultation.

The Japanese government has long exaggerated the so-called "missile and nuclear threats from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" and characterized mainland China's military actions toward Taiwan as threats to its national security. The most typical example is the claim made by Shinzo Abe and Taro Aso that "an incident in the Taiwan Strait is an incident for Japan." Under the framework of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and the Indo-Pacific Strategy, Japan has accelerated preparations for military intervention by its Self-Defense Forces in the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan Strait, and South China Sea since passing cabinet resolutions on exercising collective self-defense rights in 2015. Before late 2017, its rhetoric focused on the "threat" from North Korea, but since 2018, it has gradually shifted toward the narrative of "emergencies in the Taiwan Strait."

The current regional security landscape is characterized by strengthened multilateral military cooperation. Under the Indo-Pacific Strategy framework, the United States, Japan, Australia, and India have formed the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) mechanism, while the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia have established the Trilateral Security Partnership. The U.S. is simultaneously expanding its military cooperation network in Southeast Asia. These moves aim to construct a multi-tiered military alliance system in the Asia-Pacific region, with strategic objectives directly targeting China and North Korea. Notably, Japan continues to play a pivotal role in such military deployments.

In recent years, Japan's Self-Defense Forces have continuously advanced military reforms, prioritizing the enhancement of long-range strike capabilities and the development of rapid reaction forces. Through joint exercises with the U.S. military, shared use of military bases, and cooperation on equipment and technology, Japan's military deployments have evolved into a multi-dimensional, combat-ready system encompassing intelligence monitoring, logistical support, and joint operations. These measures have raised international concerns about escalating militarization in the region.

The Japanese Self-Defense Forces are accelerating the transformation of their military capabilities toward combat readiness by participating in trilateral U.S.-Japan-South Korea exercises, U.S.-Japan-Philippines drills, and multilateral military exercises under the Indo-Pacific Strategy framework. Notably, the Japanese government is vigorously implementing its security policy framework comprising the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Force Development Plan. It explicitly states that "to achieve effective deterrence, strategic capabilities to strike enemy military bases are necessary" and has formulated a plan to increase defense spending to 2% of GDP within five years.

In terms of weapons development, Japan is transitioning from defensive armaments to offensive weapon systems, prioritizing strategic-level acquisitions such as long-range strike missiles with over 1,000 km range and ground-attack drones. According to the Ministry of Defense's plans, key deployment areas for these weapons include remote islands near Chinese waters, such as Miyako Island, Ishigaki Island, and Yonaguni Island in the Ryukyu Islands, as well as Amami Ōshima in Kagoshima Prefecture.

Anti-war forces within Japan continue to grow, exemplified by protests launched by residents of Okinawa's Miyako Island and Ishigaki Island against the militarization of the Self-Defense Forces and missile deployments. Multiple social organizations are systematically opposing military expansion policies, with groups like the

"Thousand-Person Committee to Stop War" jointly organizing public movements against U.S. base expansion, defense budget inflation, and constitutional revision.

These anti-war organizations assert that the Japanese government deliberately exaggerates the "Taiwan Strait crisis theory" and the "Korean Peninsula security threat theory" to create a legitimate basis for enhancing military capabilities and revising Article 9 of the Constitution. Their objective is to raise public awareness of the potential risks of militarization policies and to build a social consensus for maintaining peace.

We are confident that through sustained cooperation between the governments and peoples of China and Japan, military conflicts can be effectively prevented, and long-term peace and stability in East Asia can be jointly safeguarded.

3.5 Unfinished Decolonization and the East Asian War Crisis

3.5.1 Decolonization, Termination of the Korean War, and Northeast Asian Peace

• Speaker: Kim Dong-choon

• Year : 2025

1. Decolonization, the Cold War, Division, and the Korean War

This year marks the 80th anniversary of Japan's defeat in World War II. Yet for Korea, Japan's defeat did not herald the establishment of a unified sovereign nation. Instead, it ushered in the division of the Korean Peninsula and a tragic war. The Korean War signified the failure of decolonization—the setback in establishing a unified sovereign state—and the descent of a tragedy upon all Koreans, North and South, that transcended the oppression, exploitation, and dehumanization imposed by Japanese imperialism.

Although the Korean War erupted merely five years after the end of World War II, it was an international conflict fundamentally different in nature from the previous war. If World War II was a conflict between the United Nations—comprising the Soviet Union and Western liberal democracies—against fascism, simultaneously carrying the character of national liberation struggles by colonies against imperialism, then the Korean War, from the perspective of North Korea which initiated it, bore the nature of an anti-colonial struggle to break free from Japanese imperialism. However, as the East-West Cold War intensified, the dimension of US-Soviet confrontation was superimposed, transforming it into a composite war. It evolved from a civil war into an international conflict.

Political scholars have termed this conflict a "functional substitute for World War III" or a "deformed form of World War III." Simultaneously, it partially embodied the anti-colonial struggle later linked to the Vietnam War and served as the prelude to the era of "low-intensity warfare" in the Third World.

Soviet documents declassified after the 1990s confirm that the Korean War, which erupted on June 25, 1950, resulted from Kim Il-sung and Pak Hyon-yong's doctrine of unification by force. However, this became possible only with Stalin's approval of Kim Il-sung's request for support and the active backing of China's Mao Zedong.

The United States viewed North Korea's aggression as a "police action" and intervened immediately. President Truman framed the conflict as a struggle between "freedom" and "communist slavery," demonizing communism. Yet the most

significant and substantive purpose of U.S. involvement was to "defend Japan." Washington feared that allowing North Korea's aggression unchecked would trigger a global domino effect of anti-American movements. The origins of the domino theory—the justification for U.S. intervention—trace back not to the Vietnam War, but to the Korean War.

Ultimately, the Korean War stemmed from the postwar settlement surrounding Japan's defeat—specifically, the setbacks and failures within the decolonization process. The US-Soviet partition occupation escalated into civil strife within South Korea, which then erupted into war between North and South Korea. This conflict further rigidified and entrenched the two systems, causing the decolonization agenda in Korea to suffer setbacks or delays.

2. East Asian History and the Sequence of Massacres

The greatest victims of the Korean War were undoubtedly the Korean people of both North and South. Over 3 million civilians and military personnel from both Koreas perished, along with hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers and tens of thousands of American troops. Crucially, this war was marked by large-scale massacres.

We must understand this war within the historical context of massacres in East Asia. Japan's massacres in East Asia began with the suppression of the Donghak Peasant Army uprising in Korea at the end of the 19th century. This massacre connected to the massacres during the March First Movement of 1919, the massacres against Korean independence bases in Manchuria, and the Nanjing Massacre. The massacres during the Korean War fit precisely into this "sequence," later linking to the Vietnam War and the Indonesian massacres. Japan's colonial legacy and violent legacy in Korea and neighboring Asian nations—including the aforementioned Unit 731 human experimentation—were glossed over without proper reckoning, using the Korean War as an opportunity to obscure these issues.

3. After the Armistice: Beneficiaries of War and Entrenched Division

The 1953 armistice stitched the war shut, yet its effects have kept North and South Korea in a state of war for over 70 years, approaching 80.

Japan's Revival:

Japan emerged as the greatest beneficiary of this war. The United States concluded the Treaty of San Francisco with Japan during the conflict. This process ultimately became the catalyst for Japan's return to the international order and its integration into the U.S.-led alliance. Consequently, Japan's colonial responsibilities were later

reframed as bilateral diplomatic issues between Korea and Japan or handled ambiguously. Japan recovered its World War II losses through wartime demand during the Korean War, rapidly emerging as an economic powerhouse. The so-called "55 System" also drew significant strength from the Korean War.

China's Rise:

China also emerged as a beneficiary. Less than a year after the 1949 revolution, it entered the Korean War, confronting the world's strongest power, the United States, thereby elevating its international standing. This became a crucial turning point enabling China to lead the Non-Aligned Movement in 1955 and emerge as a dominant force in the Third World.

The Strengthening of American Hegemony:

Undoubtedly, the greatest beneficiary was the United States. Despite the McCarthyist frenzy preceding the war, the conflict formally established America's "military-industrial complex" and reinforced its domestic right-wing anti-communist framework. Moreover, without the war, Taiwan likely would have been unified by China without intervention from the U.S. Seventh Fleet. Ultimately, this conflict solidified the Cold War structure across East Asia and the entire world.

4. The Current East Asian Order and the Crisis of Peace

The nature and significance of ending the Korean War must be reexamined. Through meetings with Kim Jong-un, including the 2019 Hanoi Summit, former U.S. President Trump briefly signaled willingness to issue a declaration ending the war, contingent on dismantling North Korea's nuclear facilities. However, this initiative was later stifled by domestic hardliners, leading to the talks' collapse and exposing America's lack of genuine commitment to peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Former President Trump recently visited South Korea during APEC, signaling interest in meeting Kim Jong-un. However, North Korea has not responded. Such actions reflect less genuine U.S. peace intentions than Trump's personal hero complex or isolationist tendencies.

The core threat to East Asia's peace regime remains the Korean Peninsula's division and state of war. This extends beyond an arms race, directly impacting social equity collapse, welfare cuts, poverty, and unemployment across multiple East Asian nations and societies—including South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. The prolonged anti-communist regime oppresses domestic populations. This interplay with internal contradictions must be considered when addressing Global South issues.

Moreover, China's rise evokes a historical fear among Koreans. Due to memories of tributary relationships with China over the past 500-1000 years, Korea finds itself in an extremely difficult position between the United States and China.

5. Conclusion: Transitioning to Normal States

East Asian nations—South Korea, Taiwan, North Korea, and even Japan—have yet to fully establish themselves as "normal states" since World War II. They retain characteristics of "deficient states," remaining in a state formation process.

However, the Cold War system has shifted to a neoliberal order. Establishing "normal states" today no longer means merely creating 19th-century-style sovereign nations, but rather breaking free from the shackles of imperialism and anti-communism that plunged 20th-century East Asia into tragedy.

If North and South Korea transition to a peace regime, becoming a buffer zone between the United States and China, this would play a positive role not only for the Korean Peninsula but also for East Asian peace. Therefore, the issue of ending the Korean War extends beyond regional peace and connects to the question of transforming the global order.

In the context of the 21st century, it is time to rethink the issues of decolonization and war and peace.

3.5.2 East Asian War Crisis and the Construction of an Anti-Imperialist Front

• Speaker: Kim Daebong

• Year: 2024

The global landscape currently faces unprecedented challenges. Certain international military blocs led by the United States are extending the potential flashpoints of World War III from Eastern Europe through West Asia to East Asia and the Western Pacific through proxy warfare. In Eastern Europe, Ukraine's neo-nationalist forces are attempting to attack Russian territory and sabotage the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant, seeking to escalate regional conflict. In response, the U.S.-NATO alliance is supplying weapons and military support to Ukraine while preparing to lift missile restrictions, prompting Russia to warn it will abandon tactical nuclear weapons limits. In the Middle East, Israeli forces have launched military operations in Palestine and Lebanon, causing civilian casualties and assassinating political and military leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah, ultimately triggering Iran's "True Commitment 2" military operation in October.

The imperialist camp is attempting to escalate conflicts in East Asia and the Western Pacific into a full-scale Third World War, advancing a "New Cold War" strategy. In July 2024, the "Pacification of NATO" was formalized at the NATO Washington Summit. From June to August that year, NATO member states and pro-American nations in the Western Pacific completed operational deployments through multiple multinational joint military exercises in the Pacific. Historical precedent shows that NATO's eastward expansion directly precipitated Russia's 2022 special military operation. Similarly, the current strategic expansion in the Pacific direction carries significant security risks. This bloc is constructing a series of military alliances, including the "Northeast Asian NATO" involving the U.S., Japan, and South Korea; the U.S.-Japan-Philippines-Australia "S-QUAD"; and the U.S.-UK-Australia "AUKUS". These military groups aim to thrust Japanese militarist forces to the front lines, positioning them as the vanguard for conflicts in East Asia and the Western Pacific. The United States and Japan have decided to establish a U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) Joint Command and a Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) Joint Operations Command for Land, Sea, and Air in early 2025, achieving de facto "integration." Additionally, the U.S. plans to transfer operational command authority over USFJ from the Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii to the newly established USFJ Joint Command. This move aims to confine warfare to East Asia and the Western Pacific, mirroring conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. By strengthening military coordination with South Korea's Yoon Suk-yeol administration and the Philippines' Marcos government, while simultaneously pushing Japan's participation in the "Northeast Asia NATO," "S-QUAD," and the second pillar of the AUKUS initiative, the U.S. is

progressively constructing a regional multilateral security architecture. The formation of the "Northeast Asian NATO" and its military deployments underscore the severity of the war crisis in Northeast Asia. This alliance took shape following the August 2023 Camp David Declaration between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, which established a NATO-style "collective defense principle" agreement. Subsequently, in December 2023, a real-time missile early warning information sharing system for North Korea was launched. By June 2024, NATO-style multi-domain joint military exercises named "Freedom Edge" had developed its operational capabilities. The "Freedom Edge 2" exercises held from November 13 to 15, 2024, further signaled that war in Northeast Asia is imminent. In April 2024, the United States, Japan, the Philippines, and Australia conducted joint military exercises codenamed "Maritime Cooperation Activities" in the South China Sea. At the subsequent U.S.-Japan-Philippines summit in Washington, the four nations formally established a strategic coordination mechanism. Its core objective is to build a strategic linkage system connecting Okinawa, Japan; the Taiwan region; and the Philippine archipelago to block China's access to the Pacific. Japan and the Philippines signed the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) in July of the same year and conducted their first joint military exercise in the South China Sea in August. On October 15, 2024, the four nations, along with the United Kingdom and France, held large-scale joint marine exercises, granting the mechanism operational combat capability. From January to October 2024, U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises exceeded 130 sessions. Notably, the "Iron Wolf's Fang" joint exercise from July 30 to August 1, 2024, included scenarios for a "preemptive strike" against North Korea. Additionally, the U.S. plans to deploy a Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) in Japan. This force comprises ground combat, missile, electronic warfare, and drone units, with the Typhoon missile battery and hypersonic missile battalion both falling under its command.

Triggers for conflict in East Asia and the Western Pacific are diverse, with particular vigilance warranted against South Korea's Yoon Suk-yeol administration's "martial law" and "coup d'état" schemes. The Yoon administration has revived a military organization dissolved in late 2016 for drafting "martial law documents," placing members of his private faction, the "Chung-rock faction," in key positions related to martial law. In October 2024, they provoked localized conflicts through drone incursions, heavy weapons fire, and multiple rocket launcher drills targeting North Korea. Simultaneously, domestically, they launched a crackdown on anti-Yoon public sentiment, attempting to impose "war martial law." Facing single-digit approval ratings and corruption scandals, Yoon responded by orchestrating the "war martial law" scheme. On August 30, 2024, simultaneous raids were conducted on the People's Democratic Party, the Democratic Party, and the residences of

former presidents' families. This was interpreted as a "signal of fascist oppression" and a significant indicator of both "war martial law" and a "coup by cronies." Should war break out between South Korea and North Korea, conflict in the Taiwan Strait would inevitably follow, making the two scenarios intrinsically linked.

Within the current international landscape, the anti-imperialist camp and the imperialist camp exhibit significant disparities in morality, strength, and strategy. The anti-imperialist camp upholds the principles of "anti-fascism, liberation, and reunification," representing a just stance. Conversely, the imperialist camp's pretexts for war have long been bankrupt due to their inherent logical contradictions. The imperialist camp's strength is steadily diminishing. For instance, Trump's victory in the U.S. election is accelerating its internal divisions and weakening. Simultaneously, pro-American forces in Eastern Europe, West Asia, and the Western Pacific face increasingly severe political crises, while economic and livelihood crises within European imperialist nations continue to deepen. In contrast, the anti-imperialist camp is gradually forming a powerful united front. Its core forces include North Korea, China, and Russia—armed with hydrogen bombs and hypersonic missiles—alongside Iran, a major missile power. Supporting forces encompass the "Arc of Resistance," the peoples of Asia, Latin America, and Africa, as well as anti-war and peace movements within imperialist nations themselves.

The imperialist camp employs pro-American forces as proxies in warfare, confining conflicts to specific regions far from their homelands. They wage non-nuclear hybrid warfare through localized battles across three theaters. In contrast, the anti-imperialist camp engages directly in defensive warfare near its own territories. Simultaneously, it demonstrates the capability to conduct warfare on U.S. soil. For instance, China publicly conducted its first intercontinental ballistic missile test in the Pacific in 44 years on September 25. Russia conducted strategic nuclear exercises on October 29. North Korea tested its latest intercontinental ballistic missile, the Hwasong-19, on October 31. These actions send a warning of "Mutually Assured Destruction" (MAD) to the United States—a stern warning from North Korea, China, and Russia demanding that the U.S. refrain from intervening in regional affairs.

The imperialist camp's ultimate strategy lies in launching a Third World War to slander the core forces of the anti-imperialist camp—North Korea, China, Russia, Iran, and others—as a "new axis of aggression." They seek to achieve final victory within a "new Cold War" system, thereby escaping their comprehensive crisis. However, this strategy is doomed to fail. Ukraine continues to suffer defeats, while Israel's October 26 military operation against Iran failed to proceed as planned and

has faced numerous setbacks. Should the imperialist camp initiate war in East Asia and the Western Pacific, it will inevitably face defeat.

Currently, consolidating the international united front against hegemony has become a critical strategic task. Looking back at history, the victory of the global anti-fascist alliance during World War II provided invaluable experience for human societal development. In Northeast Asia, the military and civilian populations of the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea fought in concert, ultimately crushing Japanese militarist aggression and writing an important chapter in history. Notably, the model of international cooperation formed during World War II against the common enemy of the fascist Axis powers holds lessons for building a contemporary international anti-hegemony system.

Established in Paris in October 2022, the World Anti-Imperialist Platform has undertaken sustained multi-regional struggles centered on three core missions: strengthening the international anti-imperialist struggle, purging pro-imperialist opportunist ideologies, and advancing the united movement of progressive forces. On October 5, 2024, the platform co-hosted the international symposium "World War and the Mission of Anti-Imperialist Forces" with labor organizations from the Taiwan region. The event systematically assessed the potential risks of a third world war and the geopolitical security landscape in East Asia, scientifically demonstrating the historical inevitability and practical necessity of strengthening the international united front against imperialism.

We steadfastly adhere to the path of peaceful development, yet we are undaunted by the threat of war. To effectively curb the risks of war and safeguard regional peace, we will exercise necessary strategic patience and fully utilize all legitimate means. Should hegemonic forces insist on provoking war, we will swiftly bring the conflict to an end with unwavering resolve and maximum efficiency. In light of the objective evolution of East Asia's security landscape, international anti-imperialist forces urgently need to deepen strategic coordination and establish cross-regional joint action mechanisms. In short, while striving to avert war crises, we must systematically build a national defense system and social mobilization mechanisms to counter imperialist military adventurism.

The Taiwan issue is purely China's internal affair. Achieving complete national reunification not only concerns China's sovereignty and territorial integrity but also represents the noble aspiration and just cause of all Chinese people. We firmly believe that complete reunification across the Taiwan Strait will inevitably be fully realized as history progresses. The "World Anti-Imperialist Platform" will hold high the slogans "Workers of the world, unite!" and "The people united will never be

defeated!" We will continuously innovate and strengthen the anti-imperialist front of the peoples of East Asia and the world, striving tirelessly for the day of victory. The people's struggle for self-determination and liberation is just, and its triumph is inevitable. The righteous struggles of peoples worldwide, including those in Asia, for self-determination, peace, liberation, and unity will surely prevail!

3.5.3 The Limitations of South Korean Pragmatism

• Speaker: Song Dae-han

• Year: 2025

This speech primarily reflects on how South Korea's left-wing and progressive movements should view the Lee Jae-myung administration. I also hope to help everyone understand the underlying logic of South Korean politics and trace the root causes of its various chaotic phenomena. At its core lies the fact that South Korea's national liberation struggle was never truly completed—first against Japanese fascism, then from U.S. occupation. I believe these factors are crucial for understanding the peace and security landscape in Northeast Asia.

Currently, many domestic South Korean media outlets praise President Lee Jae-myung's "pragmatism," arguing that he effectively countered Trump's tariff war and successfully reduced South Korea's reciprocal tariff rate from 25% to 15%. The Lee Jae-myung administration presented a "Make American Shipbuilding Great Again" (MAGSA) proposal and gifted Trump a replica of a Silla Dynasty golden crown, seemingly demonstrating Lee's shrewd political acumen.

But today, I wish to examine the origins of Lee Jae-myung's pragmatism, its limitations, and even the dangers it may harbor. We now seem forced into a dilemma: either confront Trump's tariff war or retreat to the pre-Trump era of capitalist globalization. In response, I propose an alternative initiative—the call recently issued at the " : People's Summit Against APEC 2025 and Trump" ()—to launch a global struggle for justice, development, and sustainability, resolutely opposing Trump's self-serving and destructive policies. While Lee Jae-myung's political abilities may be commendable, his pragmatism cannot resolve the current crisis and may even deepen its threats. Only progressive movements and parties committed to peace, justice, and sustainability can chart our path forward.

It is worth noting that the Lee Jae-myung administration came to power following months of protests after President Yoon Suk-yeol was impeached. The world witnessed Koreans bravely taking to the streets to oppose President Yoon's martial law order. Yet the news fails to mention that eight years prior, President Park Geun-hye faced similar protests and impeachment, which subsequently brought Korea only despondency and disillusionment. South Korea's electoral system essentially forces voters to choose between the conservative People Power Party and the progressive Democratic Party. This framework, established in 1987, effectively renders votes for any third party meaningless due to the absence of runoff elections.

Eight years ago, following Park Geun-hye's downfall, the Democratic Party's Moon Jae-in administration was elected on a platform of sweeping social reforms. Though President Moon presented himself as a progressive centrist, his tenure was marked by incompetence, indecisiveness, and failed reform attempts, sparking widespread political disillusionment among Koreans—a phenomenon dubbed the "Moon Jae-in trauma." The Candlelight Revolution peacefully ousted the corrupt President Park Geun-hye, yet the subsequent administration failed to build a fairer, more livable Korea. The public's fervor yielded only another five years of disappointment. This trauma propelled Yoon Suk-yeol to power and shaped Lee Jae-myung's "moderate conservatism" and pragmatism.

The previous Yoon Suk-yeol administration was obsessed with making South Korea a "forward pivot" in America's global security architecture. Following this, the Lee Jae-myung administration promised a more balanced foreign policy centered on South Korea's national interests. Yet, as revealed by the Lee administration's recent agreement with Trump, Lee's so-called pragmatism still locks South Korea onto America's imperialist trajectory, making it a pawn in a destructive new Cold War.

In this recent U.S.-South Korea agreement, the South Korean government pledged to invest \$350 billion in the United States—exceeding 80% of South Korea's dollar reserves. Of this amount, \$150 billion will be invested in U.S. shipyards to help expand America's naval capabilities and enhance its ability to deploy warships globally. The Lee Jae-myung administration also touted its agreement with the U.S. to acquire nuclear submarines, which undoubtedly intensifies the pressure of an arms race on the peninsula. Moreover, the U.S. will monitor the weapons and equipment it sells, even determining their final use. This effectively further binds the South Korean military to the U.S., far from enhancing its autonomy. Moreover, the remaining \$200 billion investment will embed South Korea's industrial capacity—primarily in the semiconductor sector—into the U.S. economy, deepening structural dependence on America. While the South Korean government will use public funds to invest in domestic companies producing and profiting in the U.S., these measures will do little to create jobs or provide welfare benefits for South Korean citizens.

Ultimately, Lee Jae-myung's pragmatism has made no progress on the issues we face. What it gives with the left hand, it immediately takes back with the right. For instance, while the Lee administration pledges to expand renewable energy domestically, it simultaneously plans to build energy-intensive large-scale data centers in a blind rush to compete in artificial intelligence. While proclaiming peace is priceless, it seeks to transform South Korea into the world's fourth-largest arms exporter.

Currently, South Korea remains trapped in a futile oscillation between conservative and liberal parties, both deeply entangled with corporate conglomerates and unwilling to break from the U.S.-South Korea alliance. One might ask: What lies behind this democratic and political impasse? I believe the answer is twofold. First, due to U.S. intervention, South Korea failed to achieve complete national liberation from Japanese colonial rule, leaving politicians complicit with the Japanese still in power domestically. The subsequent Cold War landscape further cemented the rule of pro-American and pro-Japanese factions in South Korea. A recent example is the conservative People Power Party presidential candidate Kim Moon-soo openly supporting Yoon Suk-yeol's martial law declaration yet still securing 41% of the vote in the last presidential election. The Cold War framework shaped South Korea into a nation characterized by entrenched anti-communism and structural dependence on the United States. Consequently, the political landscape effectively offers only conservative (People Power Party) and moderate conservative (Democratic Party) options, leaving little genuine choice. Breaking this deadlock requires deeper democratization, as exemplified by recent constitutional reform initiatives emerging from protests against martial law. These proposals aim to grant citizens the right to introduce legislation to the National Assembly.

The purpose of our struggle is to break free from Cold War mentalities, offer alternatives that improve the lives of the majority, and build social movements that inspire the majority—this is not only the task of South Korea's social movements but also the path faced by movement organizations in many countries around the world. Our goals cannot be achieved by relying on the Democratic Party of Korea, but through the struggle of independent progressive parties and movements. The current anti-Trump sentiment in South Korean society may create an opportunity for us to replace Lee Jae-myung's pragmatism with a genuine movement for reform and social change.

During the recent APEC 2025 Leaders' Summit in Gyeongju, South Korea's left and progressive movements fired the first shot. The protests we organized opposed not only Trump's tariff wars but also the closed-door APEC summit dominated solely by transnational corporate interests. Our voice also implicitly criticized Lee Jae-myung's pragmatism.

Lee Jae-myung's pragmatism cannot achieve peace and security in Northeast Asia. Instead, we need a global social movement upholding the vision of a just and sustainable world. The struggle against Trump provides us with a starting point. Therefore, as part of the international people's movement opposing APEC 2025 and Trump, South Korean social movements and organizations like the International People's Assembly call upon people worldwide to launch protests on January 20,

2026—the one-year anniversary of Trump's inauguration—to collectively oppose his destructive actions and policies.

3.6 Against Forgetting: Safeguarding the Memory of International Cooperation and Shared Victory

3.6.1 The Narrative of the Anti-Fascist War in Western Historiography and the Necessity of Defending the Eastern Front

• Speaker: Matthew Read

• Year: 2025

Good morning. I have been invited to briefly discuss how the global anti-fascist war is portrayed in Western historiography, why Western historical revisionism is intensifying today, and what insights the significance of the Eastern Front offers for our present.

I. The Western Narrative

In Western historiography, the World Anti-Fascist War—or, as it is termed in the West, "World War II"—began on September 1, 1939, the day fascist Germany invaded Poland. As several previous speakers have noted today, this choice of date is initially puzzling, given that numerous significant acts of war occurred prior to 1939. For example:

September 1931: Japanese occupation of Manchuria; 1935: Italian invasion of Ethiopia; 1936: Fascist coup triggers the Spanish Civil War; 1937: Full-scale Japanese invasion of China; 1938: German annexation of Czechoslovakia; Summer 1939: Japanese aggression against the Mongolian People's Republic.

Why do Western historians so deliberately marginalize the Eastern Front? Why are these events merely categorized as "minor conflicts preceding the Great War"?

Of course, Eurocentrism plays a significant role in this biased perception. Yet this still fails to explain why the German occupation of Czechoslovakia or the Spanish Civil War are not regarded by Western historians as the starting points of World War II.

A clue to understanding this question can be found in a 2019 European Parliament resolution, reaffirmed this year in February 2025, titled "The Importance of European Memory for the Future of Europe." In this resolution, we find the following statement:

"...On August 23, 1939, the Communist Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a non-aggression treaty with secret protocols, dividing Europe and the territories of independent nations between these two totalitarian

regimes and establishing spheres of influence. This paved the way for the outbreak of World War II."

Here, we witness dangerous historical revisionism at work: the Soviet Union is branded as an accomplice to fascist aggression rather than recognized as its victim. The resolution offers not a single instance of self-critical reflection on the years of collusion and negotiations between Western powers and fascist Germany. The EU conveniently erases from history the pivotal role American capital played in building Germany's heavy industry during the 1930s, as well as the British government's 1935 unilateral agreement permitting Nazi Germany's massive naval expansion. The Soviet Union's protests against the 1938 Munich Agreement and its efforts to assist Czechoslovakia in resisting Hitler's aggression appear to have never occurred. For them, the war began in 1939, with two "totalitarian regimes" as the primary culprits.

What we witness here is Western historiography attempting to obscure the truth of the global anti-fascist war and whitewash the West's complicity in the rise of fascism. They have crafted a narrative portraying "Western democracy" as the antithesis of "totalitarian fascism and communism" in the 20th century. It is precisely this historical narrative that underpins the West's contemporary self-proclaimed battle lines between "democracy and despotism."

If we reject this narrative and properly situate the Eastern Front within its historical context, we arrive at a radically different conclusion. We can discern a coherent trajectory running through the entire 1930s, revealing the true nature of this war: imperialist powers deliberately redividing the world among themselves. Japan and Germany—as latecomers to colonial expansion—sought to secure their "place in the sun" by enslaving East Asia and Eastern Europe and seizing colonies from imperialist rivals. Meanwhile, the United States, Britain, and France sought to preserve their own colonies and, where possible, exploit fascism as a tool to attack socialist Soviet Russia and national liberation movements worldwide.

Thus, it was the inherent contradictions of capitalism—not "totalitarian regimes"—that "paved the way for the outbreak of World War II." And it was the Soviet Union and the Chinese people—under the leadership of their Communist Party—who bore the greatest responsibility and cost in liberating the world from fascism.

II. The Intensification of Contemporary Historical Revisionism

This truth is now under fierce attack in the West. Across Eastern Europe, we witness local groups, incited by US-funded media, defacing and dismantling hundreds of Red Army anti-fascist monuments. Simultaneously, fascist forces that collaborated with

the German Wehrmacht—such as Ukraine's Bandera followers—are being rehabilitated as freedom fighters. The European Union stands as a central driver of this historical revisionism, as it funds various projects aimed at discrediting the historic anti-fascist struggle of Eastern European communists.



Let me cite a few examples from Berlin. As mentioned, this morning, Berlin was one of the final battlefields in Europe during the anti-fascist war. Since 2022, authorities have banned the display of Soviet symbols on Liberation Day, May 8th and 9th. On the left, you can see German police standing on a pile of confiscated newspapers at the entrance to the Red Army collective graves memorial. The newspapers were seized because their cover featured the iconic photograph of Red Army soldiers raising the Soviet flag atop the German Reichstag. Authorities prohibit displaying this flag at the memorial, while NATO and Ukrainian flags are permitted to fly. On the right, we see the monument once dedicated to the comfort women—women forced into sexual slavery by Imperial Japan—which stood in front of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin before being dismantled by authorities in October. We see a protest sign reading: "Why is a peace monument being dismantled in an era of war and fascism?" This is the crux of the matter: why is this happening? Why do Western nations fear the anti-fascist legacy so intensely?

These developments must be understood within the context previously discussed by earlier speakers at this forum: the resurgence of militarism. Just as in Japan, we are witnessing the revival of German militarism today. NATO is preparing for war, and the German government makes no secret of this. German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius of the Social Democratic Party has explicitly set 2029 as the year Germany must be prepared for war. They are repeating the same old story that worked so well in 1914 and 1933: "Europe is being forced into militarization. We must defend our sovereignty against Russia."

Ultimately, we are witnessing the same dynamics as in the two previous world wars: imperialist nations are attempting to uphold their exploitative world order. Those nations standing in the way—whether Russia, China, Palestine, Iran, or Venezuela—will be dehumanized, labeled "totalitarian" or "terrorist," and then attacked. One need only look at what remains of Gaza to understand the extremes NATO nations are willing to go to.

III. The Crucial Significance of the Eastern Front

Against the backdrop of NATO's military preparations, we must clearly recognize who the aggressors are and who represents peace and progress in the world. To defend the truth, we must uphold the historical significance of the Eastern Front in the global anti-fascist war.

China was the first nation to resist fascist aggression. The Chinese people waged a resolute and bloody struggle lasting 14 years, culminating in a great victory in 1945. For us Europeans, it is crucial to remember that without the heroic efforts of the Chinese people in containing and defeating Japanese imperialism on the Eastern Front, the Soviet victory and our liberation from fascism would not have been possible.

The Communist Party of China and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union deeply understood the interconnectedness of different fronts in the war. They grasped the unity of the anti-imperialist struggle.

More importantly, they grasped the fundamental link between national liberation and social liberation: by combining progressive, people-centered patriotic ideology with internationalism, they were able to mobilize broad masses and defeat the supremacist ideology of imperialists on every front.

This is the tradition we must uphold and defend today, safeguarding it from the erosion of historical revisionism.

3.6.2 The Forgotten Collaboration

- Speaker: Lu Tonglin

- Year: 2025

This collaboration occurred precisely at the dawn of the Cold War. Yet the intensifying ideological conflict erased the history of the first successful cooperation between the U.S. government and the Chinese Communist Party. Surprisingly, this collaboration was built upon the very foundation of their ideological conflict.

Two relatively complete sets of historical materials lie buried in the U.S. National Archives. From late September 1944 to early April 1945, members of the U.S. Military Observer Group compiled 71 "Yan'an Reports," focusing their analysis on the Japanese Workers and Peasants School in Yan'an. Simultaneously, between September 29 and December 28, 1945, William Michaelweyn, director of the Japanese POW training base in Huntsville, Texas, produced 14 reports on the facility. Comparing these two sets of invaluable records reveals the Japanese Workers' and Farmers' School's influence on post-war American POW operations.

The U.S. Military Observer Group arrived in Yan'an on July 22, 1944. Over nearly three years, hundreds of members produced thousands of investigative reports on the Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Army of the Chinese Communist Party. However, due to the onset of the Cold War, this intelligence had little tangible impact on the course of World War II. Only 71 Yan'an reports stood out, becoming the first relatively successful example of cooperation. Why was this?

Three primary reasons stand out. First, the U.S. military urgently needed solutions to immediate crises. At the outset of the Pacific War, Japanese soldiers fought to the death, inflicting heavy casualties on American forces. This threat intensified as the war progressed. During the Battle of Saipan on July 9, 1944, Japanese troops not only launched suicidal assaults that caused massive American losses but also, after the island fell, saw large numbers of soldiers and civilians—including many mothers with children—jump into the sea to commit suicide. To address this challenge, the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) dispatched Japan experts to other parts of Asia—such as Lido in India—as early as 1942 during the Pacific War's initial phase. However, no substantive solutions were found locally. American intelligence officers also feared that excessive collaboration with established colonial powers like Britain would provoke local resentment, causing such efforts to falter midway.

Second, the Chinese Communist Party's management of Japanese prisoners of war stood as the Pacific theater's sole relatively successful model. Though this work formed the core of the CPC's political and ideological operations, the pragmatically

driven U.S. government prioritized it regardless. On February 11, 1943, one year after the attack on Pearl Harbor, William Joseph Donovan, Director of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), dispatched representatives to discuss with the State Department the possibility of sending Chinese-speaking intelligence officers—such as John S. Service—to the Communist rear bases in North China to gather intelligence "for use in assisting the OSS in formulating psychological warfare plans. "However, fearing to offend the Chiang Kai-shek regime, the plan was shelved.

The success of the CCP's work with Japanese prisoners of war stemmed from several factors.

First, the CPC drew upon its tradition of enemy-line work during the civil war. From 1927 to 1937, during the first phase of civil conflict between the Kuomintang and the CPC, the Nationalist forces held overwhelming superiority in military strength and manpower. The Red Army relied on guerrilla warfare for survival, making enemy-line work a crucial weapon.

Second was the CCP's tradition of "crossing the river by feeling the stones." However, the Japanese army was not the Kuomintang army. When the CCP mechanically applied its enemy work tactics from the civil war to the Sino-Japanese battlefield, it not only proved ineffective but also inflicted heavy losses on the Eighth Route Army. For instance, during the Battle of Pingxingguan, when Eighth Route Army soldiers shouted in Chinese, "Surrender your weapons and you will not be harmed," the encircled Japanese troops unexpectedly launched a fierce counterattack, resulting in the complete annihilation of the entire unit. Learning from this failure, the CPC's political work department first focused on language barriers. They enlisted Chinese soldiers proficient in Japanese for propaganda efforts and befriended the few Japanese prisoners of war, thereby establishing an anti-war alliance.

Third, and crucially, the Communist Party's enemy-work tradition underwent complete Japanese adaptation. In March 1940, Japanese Communist leader Nosaka Sanzo, pursued by the Japanese government, fled secretly to Yan'an under the aliases Lin Zhe and later Okano Susumu. Observing the initial success of the Eighth Route Army's propaganda efforts against Japanese forces, he decided to remain in Yan'an and helped establish the Japanese Workers and Peasants School for the Communist Party. This school operated as a largely autonomous institution. By its later stages, aside from Chinese logistical support staff, Principal Nosaka and another Japanese exile, nearly all faculty and staff were Japanese prisoners of war. As Mao Zedong once remarked to members of the observation group, "It's absurd

for Chinese to think they can write leaflets that move Japanese hearts. Japanese prisoners do this job exceptionally well."

Opponents of the Japanese military had widely assumed that Japanese soldiers were brainwashed by militarism and possessed unwavering loyalty to the Emperor. The reality was quite different. Their willingness to die rather than surrender stemmed from a deep-seated fear of becoming prisoners of war. First, the Japanese military treated prisoners with extreme cruelty, and they feared the enemy would retaliate in kind. Second, if a prisoner returned to his unit, he would be branded a traitor, face a military tribunal, and risk execution or imprisonment, never to see his family again.

Persuading Japanese soldiers who shared their former beliefs proved relatively easy for the students of the Japanese Workers and Peasants School. Their very presence served as irrefutable proof of the Eighth Route Army's humane treatment of prisoners. Furthermore, given the strong exclusivity of Japanese culture, shared language and cultural background made Japanese soldiers more receptive to propaganda from students with similar backgrounds. They came to understand that Japanese militarism was not invincible but was in fact a dying process. Under these circumstances, they understood that POWs working for the resistance would return home honored. Through such psychological persuasion, many Japanese prisoners quickly became core members of the resistance. They weren't opposing their government for abstract ideals, but to overthrow it and secure the right to reunite with their families.

The relatively successful transplantation of the Yan'an Workers' and Peasants' School to the United States owed much to the collaboration of two "Japan experts" with opposing political stances. John Emerson, politically conservative, navigated American political circles, sidestepped ideological minefields, and persuaded the State Department to establish a Japanese POW training base in Huntsville, Texas. Although the curriculum was nearly identical to Yan'an's, substituting communist education with the U.S. Constitution, Emerson skillfully obscured the connection for the American government. Meanwhile, leftist Japanese immigrant Koji Ariyoshi laid the groundwork for Emerson's proposals. Leveraging his Japanese heritage and affinity for communist ideology, Koji Ariyoshi integrated seamlessly with fellow trainees. He conducted meticulous investigations into organizational structures, curricula, and daily routines, producing an exceptional report—likely more thorough than even Chinese observers could achieve—as this constituted an autonomous realm of Japanese culture.

In Yan'an, a documentary filmed by the U.S. Military Observer Group included footage of the Eighth Route Army attacking a bunker. Though armed with primitive weapons like spears and hunting rifles, the Eighth Route Army succeeded in capturing the bunker. This victory was made possible by the Liberation League trainees' relentless psychological warfare against Japanese soldiers before the battle. Japanese prisoners of war played similar roles behind enemy lines, a tactic that proved relatively common in the rear theater.

3.6.3 The Forgotten Perspective: Yugoslavia-China Connections and Global South Solidarity

- Speaker: Sanja Horvatičić

- Year: 2025

I am grateful for the speaker who spoke before me because he provided some very important context for some of the aspects that I will touch upon as well. But I will start with some quotes.

"China has been fighting for six years. Every day it is getting closer to its victory. The entire people are united and will win because the people want that and because they have women fighters like Zhao Yiman in their ranks. She wrote with her blood on the walls of the prison cell before being shot by the Japanese fascists: 'Fight to the end.'"

This is a quote from a partisan women's newspaper published in Yugoslavia in July 1942 in a paper called "The Comrades". And another quote:

"Through rains and forests, hour after hour, one after another, step by step, the partisans march—tired, exhausted. They march and march. In their minds, they remember the glorious 10,000 kilometers their Chinese comrades have crossed. They go on without respite or rest. They go persistently towards their camp."

These lines were written in October 1941 and printed in the first edition of the partisan paper "The Fighter". The paper was produced on a typing machine and copied on a simple stencil machine to be disseminated to the local peasants of the region, Sjeničak, a small village in central Croatia, then Yugoslavia. Its author and editor, Vlado Jovanović, came back from Spain some months earlier where he lost the struggle for democracy against fascism, together with his comrades from around the world.

Reportedly, on the way back in French prison camps, he spent time with Chinese comrades who were following the news from China while in the camp. There he wrote in one of the testimonies that, for the first time, he learnt about the concept of liberated territories as a guerrilla warfare strategy. And this strategy, indeed, was the key for liberating Yugoslavia in the People's Liberation struggle. It was also key for carrying out the revolution through the four years of war against fascism in former Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia was composed of numerous ethnicities—the nations of South Slavs—who, after World War II, managed to form a state of their own after centuries under the domination of empires like the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Ottoman Empire,

but also the nations on the coast of the Adriatic. Yugoslav partisans were formed from June and July 1941 onwards, upon the call of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The war mostly fought in the rural areas across the Dinaric mountains, which cartographers of the empires couldn't capture in their maps. Here, partisans fought together and in alliance with nature.

From guerrilla units, they formed a respectable army, which was also joined by about one hundred thousand women, almost a quarter of whom lost their lives during the war. Partisans organized hospitals, schools, print shops, and other forms of artistic workshops where agitprop materials were produced. These activities in the liberated territories, where people lived under the protection of their army, were indeed crucial for the socialist revolution led by the party and Tito as the supreme commander. They fought against the ethnic divisions generated and fabricated by foreign and domestic fascists with the 'Brotherhood and Unity', and defined the common enemy of all ethnic groups as fascists and also as a class enemy. Already during the war, they included women as equals on all levels of decision-making, and women organized their own platforms for emancipation. Losses were huge. It was the third country in Europe for military and civilian losses. I hope these numbers are in alignment with the research that we heard about from Vijay this morning.

But the history was written and rewritten many times after that—from giving huge credits to the Soviet Red Army as Yugoslav allies in the first couple of years after the war ended, through the change of the official narrative that emphasized exclusively Yugoslav self-liberation after Tito split with Stalin, and then finally to the shift emphasizing almost embarrassingly Western allies, British and the US, as the key allies, which is mainly pronounced after the fall of Yugoslavia and fall of socialism in the 1990s, and which again has been on the rise in the recent years.

We are witnessing vulgar historical revisionism and legitimization of Croatian, Bosnian, Slovenian, and Serbian historical fascists, but also their collaborators. And I would like to mention that this is a crucial moment in my home country at the moment, where we are really facing the rise of widespread fascism in the streets, very much similar to what we heard from Germany, and under the guise of the European Union's equation of communism and fascism.

But what has been lost in all these versions of the official history are those initial horizons. I believe much wider than we imagine the world in World War II from a Eurocentric perspective. Yes, Spain has been remembered, as Spain is also part of the European memory of war, and importantly, also the US. My research, which is an in-depth research in the rural area of Croatia in Žumberak, a partisan hotspot, revealed how important those wider horizons were for ordinary people, for

peasants, and for their imagination of the scale and the power of those who struggled against fascism.

Another crucial element is their capacity to identify with Chinese peasants who marched in hundreds of thousands. And this sense of internationalism and solidarity as commonality can be felt not just in official materials, but also in partisan folk songs and theatre plays. This memory is still, and I think very significantly, kept in the local community memory where I lead conversations about history—much more informed and critically sharp than many academic events that I attend.

Official Yugoslav memory politics, however, erased the memory of the Chinese almost completely. The famous quote of Mao, which you can see on the slide—which I'm sure you're familiar with—was even ascribed to one of the Yugoslav commanders as his own innovation. The reason for this was also the severance of diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and China for the first 25 years after WWII. However, in the early post-war period, in 1947, during an official visit, Chinese emissary Liu Ningyi stated the following:

"In our own liberated territory in China, we have a strong army of 1,200,000 fighters. Beside our enemy, we also have strong partisan units that count 4,000,000 fighters. In the same way Yugoslav partisans and Yugoslav Army, under the leadership of Comrade Tito, managed to win over the reaction and fascist warmongers. So will the Chinese Army and Chinese partisans successfully win and finally break the reaction." We can see now how these commonalities and inspirations functioned in both ways.

During the period of friendly relations, this connection between Yugoslav and Chinese struggle against fascism, as one of the researchers from Croatia has recently noted, was in diplomatic circles brought to almost mythological proportions.

In the context of the Cold War, Yugoslavia and China for a long time led opposite foreign policies, but both were committed to connecting and supporting anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles in the Global South. The Yugoslav resistance against fascism—the People's Liberation struggle—was used as the common experience of oppressed peoples across Africa and Asia. Travelling exhibitions of art depicting Yugoslav partisans, or even translations of Yugoslav poetry to Vietnamese and other languages, were promoted. Some even travelled to China, and these are things that I would like to explore further. Yet most successful were the films, such as "Walter Defends Sarajevo" and "The Battle of Neretva", that gained huge popularity in China in the 1970s. I'm sure that many of you could tell me more about this.

To conclude, today's situation differs dramatically from these alliances and horizons that we see. And I would like to emphasize here Gaza and the unprecedented violence, alienation, and the delegitimization of resistance. Yet the need for wider horizons and solidarity remains urgent. We need solidarity connecting those who oppose the forces of division and war. We must also look at history from below. Heritage deserves the heirs of the past, not those who profit and whitewash history.

More research is needed to uncover these forgotten allies and horizons that inspired people to persist despite hardships. This talk argues that recovering forgotten transnational connections is essential for challenging Eurocentric historical narratives, understanding how revolutionary knowledge travelled through unexpected routes and agents, building contemporary solidarity based on historical patterns of resistance, and recognizing that internationalism was real and practical, not something abstract.

The 'forgotten horizons' of the title refers both to the lost connections between Yugoslav and Chinese revolutionaries and to the broader international consciousness that ordinary people once possessed, but which dominant historical narratives have obscured.

I would also like to mention at the end that, despite official policies and historical narratives used today to create a simplified, glossed-over picture of the world and its common struggles of the past, there is great potential in looking at different sources than just diplomatic archives. Especially, what I argue for is what is necessary: going to the countryside, speaking to the people, learning from those who were on the front lines or whose grandfathers and grandmothers fought in the resistance against fascism. In the project I'm coordinating in Croatia with my fellow researchers from different countries, I aim to do exactly that—to approach history and heritage from below and to use micro-history preserved in memory and materiality of the war and resistance to understand macro-historical processes that continue to inform the hyper-political reality of today.

3.6.4 Awakened Memories: The Role of Russian Media in Exposing the Truth About Unit 731 and Highlighting Soviet-Chinese Cooperation During WWII

• Speaker: Sofya Melnichuk

• Year: 2025

After World War II, people worldwide sought justice and lessons from past traumas. Yet today we face a new peril: historical memory—especially concerning the Eastern Front and the Soviet-Chinese alliance against Japanese militarism—is increasingly weaponized as a political tool. In this climate, journalists bear a unique responsibility. We must not only relay historians' discoveries and share historical narratives with our audience. Like researchers ourselves, we must actively seek out these historical memories, strive to preserve them, and contribute our share.

This year, we embarked on this work with particular passion, focusing intently on a dark chapter in our shared history: the atrocities committed by Japan's Unit 731. In 1945, during the campaign to liberate Northeast China, the Soviet Red Army struck against the Japanese Kwantung Army. It was in Northeast China where the Japanese military established those horrific laboratories. Through materials provided by the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, we gained a rare opportunity to examine archives marked "Top Secret" that had been sealed for decades. These documents include interrogation records, case files, photographs, and letters. They not only reveal the scale of Japan's war crimes but also shed light on the Soviet Union's efforts to expose these atrocities.

Our aim is not merely to recount this history, but to show that the truth lies within specific documents, specific places, and the personal stories of individuals. To this end, we traveled to Chernitsy village in Ivanovo Oblast. There once stood a heavily guarded camp under the jurisdiction of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs—Labor Camp No. 48. This red-brick building once held numerous prisoners of war, including German generals, Hungarian and Romanian officers, and Japanese soldiers—among them Yamada Otsuzo, the last commander of the Kwantung Army. Today, only crumbling walls and foundations remain of the camp. Yet through the traces left behind, the original layout, and archival records, we can reconstruct its former appearance in our minds and recall the fates of those once imprisoned here.

Among the declassified interrogation records of Yamada Ootosaburō accessible in the archives of the Russian Federal Security Service, these documents are not mere dry reports. Behind them lie vivid scenes of human tragedy.

Initially, the general denied all charges. He claimed complete ignorance of Unit 731, Dr. Shiro Ishii, and the human experiments. He insisted his responsibilities were

solely strategic defense matters. However, his stance shifted during subsequent interrogations, particularly in 1949. He admitted that Unit 731 was indeed under his command, and that it was upon learning of the Soviet Red Army's approach that he personally ordered the destruction of all laboratories and documents. He also recounted personally inspecting Unit 731's base near Harbin. He even mentioned a particularly horrifying detail: during a dinner party, Ishii Shiro had bragged to him about extracting salt from human urine?

This story sounds absurd to us today, yet it is precisely such details that reveal the moral depths to which Japanese militarism had sunk. In 1949, a highly unusual trial took place in Khabarovsk. It became the world's first international tribunal to expose the Japanese military's use of biological weapons. The Soviet side presented irrefutable evidence in court proving the crimes committed by Unit 731. All defendants, including Commander Yamada Otsaburo, were found guilty. However, none received the death penalty because the Soviet Union had abolished capital punishment in 1947. Consequently, the final sentence was 25 years of imprisonment. This decision stemmed not from Soviet sympathy, but from humanitarian considerations—ensuring these war criminals survived to serve as living witnesses to Japan's militarist crimes.

Unit 731 conducted numerous brutal human experiments. To them, the subjects were not regarded as human beings but referred to as "maruta"—Japanese for "log."

Archival documents clearly reveal that the Japanese military planned to deploy these biological weapons against the Soviet Red Army and Chinese civilians. Unit commander Yamada Otsuzo later admitted during interrogation that had the Soviet Red Army not swiftly advanced and halted their operations, these weapons would likely have been deployed on the battlefield. His statement underscores the critical importance of the Soviet Red Army's actions in 1945: They not only liberated Northeast China but also prevented a larger-scale humanitarian catastrophe, safeguarding countless innocent lives. As Russian journalists, we do more than just review archives and write reports. We personally visit the sites where these historical events unfolded, filming documentaries on location. We interview staff at the former camp sites, archivists, historians, and those with insider knowledge, engaging in face-to-face conversations.

We want to show our audience that this history is not some distant, abstract narrative. It is living memory, an important bond connecting Russia and China.

Standing amidst the ruins of the Chernetsy labor camp, where Yamada Otsaburo was once imprisoned, we felt history whispering to us through the crumbling bricks, yellowed archives, and forgotten names. Our foremost duty as journalists is to hear

these voices and share their stories with the world. For to forget is to condemn them to a second death. Thank you.

3.6.5 Contributions of Russian Media and Researchers in Preserving the Memory of the 1945 Soviet-Chinese Joint Victory

• Speaker: Alina Salionova

• Year: 2025

Following the September 18 Incident in 1931, China was the first to raise the banner of anti-fascist struggle, single-handedly opening and holding a crucial World War II front in the East. The ultimate victory achieved by the Chinese people after fourteen years of arduous warfare profoundly shaped the post-war international order centered on the United Nations and became a pivotal political starting point for the independence and justice struggles of Global South nations.



This year marks the 80th anniversary of both the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War and the triumph in the Soviet Great Patriotic War and the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. Both nations have held significant commemorative events to honor history and pay tribute to our martyrs. In 2025, our RT media team decided to trace the footsteps of the 1945 Soviet-Japanese War. Though brief, this conflict marked a pivotal chapter in the conclusion of the Asian

theater. Without understanding it, one cannot fully grasp the comprehensive end of WWII in Asia.



During interviews with Soviet veterans who fought in that war, they repeatedly mentioned a term Chinese civilians used to address Soviet soldiers: "Shanguo." Collaborating with Chinese colleagues, we traced the origin of this word back to the Russian "Хорошенько" (meaning "very good"). Chinese civilians misheard it as "Hala Shenguo," which was then misheard back by Soviet soldiers as "Shanguo", which means good results. This tale of linguistic mishearing and transmission has become widely circulated among the people, serving as a unique symbol of cultural integration and friendship between the two nations.



In recent years, Russian journalists and local researchers have documented dozens of forgotten sites related to the 1945 war. Venturing into remote areas, they unearthed visual records including mine-clearing projects and wartime facilities. In Amur Oblast and the Far East, tangible relics brought back by soldiers—such as Japanese swords, helmets, and letters—remain preserved. These artifacts are cherished not as trophies, but as witnesses to the memory of war.



The 88th Independent Infantry Brigade Memorial in Khabarovsk Krai



Defensive fortifications in Primorsky Krai

We also interviewed descendants of Soviet pilots who fought on the Chinese front. Take Ms. Nadezhda Kopeva, pictured here, who expressed during an event at the Chinese Embassy in Russia that her deepest desire was not to visit China's famous cities, but to see the very places where her great-grandfather had fought. This simple wish is deeply moving, revealing the enduring power of war memories passed down through families.



Through these visits, we deeply felt that the brotherhood forged between the Soviet Union and China in the crucible of war has never faded. Beyond official records, it lives on vividly through family memories.

We also researched the contributions of the Chinese people during the Great Patriotic War, examined lists of Chinese soldiers who fought in the Soviet army, and visited and interviewed their descendants. Through collaboration with Russian scholars, the life stories of Chinese youths who lived in Soviet "International Children's Homes" have been re-examined. They spent the war years in the Soviet Union, sewing cloth bags for the Red Army and surviving bombings. Their voices, preserved in archives, still recount those times.

In contemporary Russia, the contributions of the Chinese people during the Great Patriotic War are frequently acknowledged. In 2024, a play based on the story of Soviet pilot and Chinese General Tang Duo premiered in Irkutsk. Tang Duo was the sole Chinese pilot permitted to participate in the Moscow Red Square air parade and served in the Soviet Air Force for 29 years.



We also visited several Russian historians specializing in the Soviet-Japanese War. Through close collaboration with their Chinese counterparts, they have revitalized this field by organizing archives and publishing findings. Yet not all discoveries are comforting. For instance, none of the vessels from the Amur River Fleet that fought against Japan remain today; the last one was dismantled during urban redevelopment.



In Vyatskoye village, a monument commemorating the 88th International Brigade has recently been erected. Here, Chinese soldiers, Russians, Hezhe people, and Korean comrades-in-arms fought side by side. At the Moscow Region Defense Ministry Archives, we examined personal files of brigade officers; at the Far Eastern Military District Museum in Khabarovsk, we saw the authentic military flag used by the 88th Brigade during the war.

We also visited the former residence of Hero Firsov, who made the ultimate sacrifice in combat against Japan. In China, a dedicated monument stands in his honor. Additionally, there is a woman whose legacy transcends borders—Hu Jinbang. She was the sole Chinese female journalist to document the entire course of the Soviet Great Patriotic War. Her reports from the front lines greatly boosted the morale of Chinese and Soviet resistance fighters, serving as a bridge of memory between the two peoples. As a journalist, I have always regarded her as a professional role model.



All these threads of history and memory converge on a crucial question: memory itself is a form of sovereignty. To safeguard memory is to safeguard the peace our forebears secured with their lives. The work of Russian journalists and researchers contributes to restoring the historical integrity and moral truth of the shared Soviet-Chinese victory in 1945. That victory was a crucial component of the global anti-fascist struggle and laid the foundation for the post-war international order. In an era where history is repeatedly exploited and distorted, safeguarding our shared truth is not merely commemoration—it is resistance. Resistance against forgetting, resistance against falsification, resistance against the erosion of trust between nations.

Concluding Remarks

People's War, "Permanent Peace," and Marxist Theory of Journalism and Communication Practice

• Speaker: Lu Xinyu

• Year: 2025

My presentation today is titled People's War, Permanent Peace, and Marxist Theory of Journalism and Communication Practice. Given our theme of advancing a new information order for the 21st century, I wish to share my reflections from this perspective through three personal stories.

The first story concerns my mother's name. Fourteen days after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on July 7, 1937—on July 21—my mother was born in Xuancheng, Anhui, a small town in the Jiangnan region. From November 22 to 27, 1937, Japanese aircraft continuously bombed and strafed the city, dropping incendiary bombs that destroyed most homes and shops, leaving corpses strewn everywhere. My aunt recounted that during the bombing, adults hid under beds. Just as she snatched my mother—still in her cradle—from the crib, shattered window glass poured down from the bombed-out window beside it. When the bombing paused at noon that day, our entire family—elders and children alike—set out on foot with meager belongings, walking 200 kilometers to Zhuwang Village in Jingde County, southern Anhui. Nestled deep in the forests at the foot of Mount Huang, this ancient village is the thousand-year-old ancestral home of the Zhu clan—my maternal grandfather's birthplace. Today, it's a nationally recognized 4A-level scenic area. I warmly invite you all to visit my grandmother's hometown. During the escape, my grandmother's milk dried up, leaving my mother malnourished and frail from childhood. Yet she survived by sheer luck, while countless children like her perished under Japanese bombing and massacres. Thus, my mother was named Zhu Yongping: a prayer for lasting peace—the shared hope of countless ordinary Chinese people then, and the heartfelt wish of all war-torn peoples worldwide.



Historical Photo: Japanese Forces Invading Xuancheng, Anhui



Zhuwang Village today

In my maternal grandmother's village of Zhuwang, there lived a widowed elderly neighbor whom everyone respected. Her only son had gone off to fight in the War of Resistance and never returned. My grandmother's family story reflects the experiences of countless Chinese families. The War of Resistance against Japan became the defining backdrop for every household in China—it is the collective memory of a nation. The southern Anhui region where my maternal grandmother lived was a crucial battleground for the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army's advance northward against Japanese aggression and later for the New Fourth Army led by the Communist Party of China. It was also the site of the 1941 Wannan Incident, which shocked China and the world—under the Kuomintang's anti-communist policies and military encirclement, over 7,000 members of the Communist Party's anti-Japanese forces were lost.

It was around the time my maternal grandmother's family and countless ordinary Chinese people embarked on their exodus that Mao Zedong delivered a series of speeches and articles. He emphasized that the war against Japan could not be fought solely by the military and government; it must be a mobilization of the entire nation. The majority of the people received news through enemy artillery fire and air raids—a form of mobilization, albeit one imposed upon us by our adversaries. For China to achieve nationwide mobilization for the war, democratic political reforms within the state and military were essential to unify officers and soldiers, and to unite the military and the people.

In May 1938, Mao Zedong called for fighting for lasting peace for humanity in *On Protracted War*. He emphasized that the protracted nature of China's War of Resistance was inseparable from the pursuit of lasting peace for China and the world: "The war between China and Japan, two nations with a combined population of over 5, will play a crucial role in this struggle. The liberation of the Chinese nation will be achieved through this war. The future liberated New China is inseparable from the future liberated New World. Therefore, our War of Resistance against Japan inherently carries the nature of fighting for lasting peace." He stated that wars fall into two categories: just and unjust. Japan's war was an unjust war obstructing progress, which all peoples of the world—including the Japanese people—should oppose and were indeed opposing. "Our war is sacred, just, progressive, and seeks peace. It seeks not only peace for one nation but peace for the entire world. To achieve this goal, we must fight to the death, prepare for all sacrifices, persevere to the end, and never cease until our objective is attained. Though the sacrifices may be great and the time long, the new world of lasting peace and eternal light stands clearly before us. Our conviction in waging this war is founded upon this new China and new world striving for lasting peace and enduring light. While the fascists seek to prolong the war indefinitely, we shall bring it to an end in the not-too-distant future."



Mao Zedong stated that such a great national liberation war could not be won without widespread and deep political mobilization. Our first task is to communicate the political objectives of the war to our troops and people. Every soldier and every citizen must understand why we fight and how this struggle relates to them. Merely stating the objectives is insufficient; we must also explain the steps and policies for achieving them—that is, the political program. Without a clear and concrete political program, we cannot mobilize the entire army and people to fight the war to the end. So how do we mobilize? "Through oral communication, leaflets and proclamations, newspapers and books, plays and films, schools, mass organizations, and cadres," Mao emphasized. "It is not about reciting the political program to the people—such recitation falls on deaf ears. Instead, we must link the political mobilization to the unfolding war situation and the daily lives of soldiers and civilians, transforming it into a sustained campaign. This is a matter of utmost importance; victory in war depends first and foremost on it. "This encapsulates the Communist Party of China's propaganda philosophy: soldiers and civilians form the foundation of victory. The deepest wellspring of war's power lies within the masses, and propaganda—as the cornerstone of political work —serves as its prerequisite. Without the infusion of progressive political spirit, it would be impossible to achieve the democratic transformation of military officers and soldiers into a united front, nor to unite the unorganized masses. Only when the army and the people become one—when the army is seen by the people as their own army—can such a force

become invincible. This unity is first and foremost the result of political and ideological propaganda.



The image depicts a leaflet titled "Urgent Mobilization to Crush the Enemy's Autumn Sweep," compiled and printed by the Agricultural and Industrial Production Exhibition of the Tai Nan District in the Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan Border Region during the War of Resistance Against Japan. It mobilized the masses for urgent war preparations through accessible, easy-to-remember rhymes.

The second story concerns a Japanese war criminal, recounted by Song Kankan, a Shanghai Television correspondent based in Japan, who interviewed elderly Japanese veterans. Among them was an old man named Ishiwata Takeshi, born in 1913. He graduated from Tokyo Imperial University in 1938 with a degree in philosophy, specializing in Kantian studies. In 1942, he joined the North China Expeditionary Force and entered the Chinese battlefield. His basic training involved slaps and various forms of corporal punishment, designed to destroy human dignity. Those who couldn't endure either deserted or committed suicide. The latrine became the only place to catch one's breath, and some recruits chose to end their lives there. It was a process of turning people into ghosts. Three years later, when he began training recruits himself, he had become convinced that corporal punishment was the most effective form of education, treating new soldiers with even greater cruelty. During a live-fire exercise, he captured Chinese civilians as human targets. A 16-year-old boy cried out, pleading to be sent home because his mother was waiting for him, but he showed no mercy. Instead, he used harsh, violent rebukes to force reluctant recruits to carry out the slaughter.



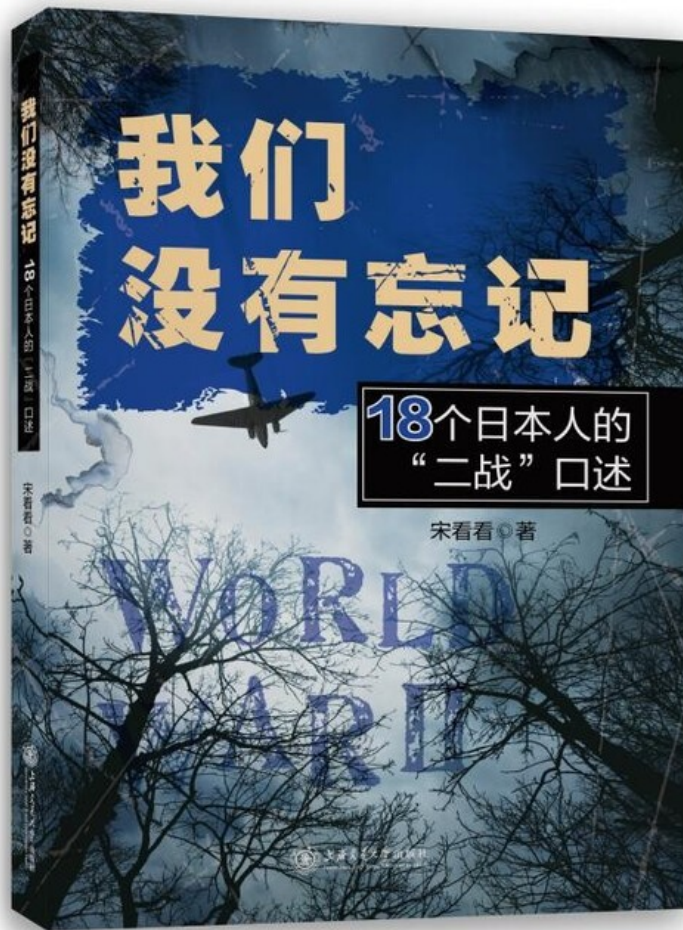
After Japan's surrender, he was sent by Soviet forces to build railways in Siberia for five years. In 1950, he was transferred to the Fushun Prisoner-of-War Camp for six years—a period he later described as the happiest days of his life. It was here, following the victory in the Korean War, that he began abandoning his delusions of impunity and seriously reflecting on how he had reached this point. Through extensive reading, he encountered Mao Zedong's works such as *On New Democracy*, *On Practice*, and *On Contradiction*. Mao's accurate foresight into the course of the Chinese Revolution profoundly shook his understanding of the true nature of Japan's invasion of China, sparking his first thoughts of atonement and confession. When he read in *On Protracted War* that to achieve final victory, while upholding democracy between officers and soldiers and between the army and the people, Japanese prisoners of war should be treated through political persuasion—not by insulting their sense of honor, but by understanding and guiding that very sense of honor—he grasped the method of lenient treatment. This approach guided them to recognize the anti-people, aggressive nature of Japanese rulers, while simultaneously demonstrating the indomitable spirit and heroic tenacity of the Chinese military and people. Only then did he understand why prisoners of war received humane treatment at the Fushun Prisoner-of-War Camp in China.



Upon leaving the Fushun War Criminals Management Center in 1956, the Chinese side not only returned their personal belongings but also provided essential daily necessities and renminbi, enabling them to purchase gifts for their families. After returning to Japan, he helped establish the "China Returnees Liaison Association" (abbreviated as "CRLA"), which conducted peace and anti-war campaigns in Japan to safeguard the pacifist constitution. In 2002, the association dissolved due to the advanced age of its members, but the subsequent "Fushun Miracle Witness Association" carried forward its anti-war mission. He stated: "Those I killed cannot be brought back to life, and atonement has no endpoint. Making the victims' wishes my own, preventing unjust wars, and pursuing a world of lasting peace is the entirety of my remaining life. "Until his death at age 101 in 2015, he remained active in anti-war efforts at his computer. This war criminal, who studied and cherished Kantian philosophy, ultimately found hope for lasting peace in Mao Zedong Thought and the Chinese Communist Party's leadership during the War of Resistance Against Japan.



Takashi Ishiwata participated in the "China Returnees Liaison Association."



The third story is about the village of Rongjiang in Guizhou Province. Rongjiang is a revolutionary base area and mountainous region in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, where poverty is most widespread and severe. As the last county to lift itself out of poverty in 2020, Rongjiang has a population of 385,000, with 16 ethnic minorities accounting for 83.9% of the total. Even after escaping poverty, it remained virtually unknown, starting from scratch. However, since the 2023 "Village Super League" phenomenon exploded onto the national stage, it rapidly became a sweeping online phenomenon. That year alone, it generated 70 billion views, attracted 7.6585 million visitors, and achieved a comprehensive tourism revenue of 8.398 billion yuan. It even earned praise from General Secretary Xi Jinping in his 2024 New Year Address. Today, the Village Super League has evolved into an epic phenomenon generating hundreds of billions in traffic, creating a nationwide communication spectacle where everyone is a disseminator, each a promoter, and every village has its spokesperson. They say:

The Village Super League is mass communication; communication is productivity; communication is the engine driving the Village Super League.



At the 2024 Global South Academic Forum themed "The Global South and World Modernization," officials and residents from Rongjiang shared the Village Super League story. Deputy County Governor Chen Xuemin delivered a speech titled "Football + Attention + Planet: Finding the Brand Path to Rural Revitalization Through the Joy of Rural Sports." He emphasized that the Village Super League mobilizes the entire population to forge new paths, driving Rongjiang's high-quality development. The first step in mobilizing the masses, he said, is to build their trust in the government. The challenge of mobilizing people without generating sufficient endogenous development momentum is widespread in rural revitalization and must be addressed first. How did Rongjiang tackle this?



Photo: Deputy County Governor Chen Xuemin of Rongjiang County shares the Village Super League story at the Global South Academic Forum (2024)

This brings us back to the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1938—a pivotal year during the War of Resistance Against Japan. Mao Zedong made a famous statement: "After the political line is determined, cadres become the decisive factor." This principle became the most important organizational line of the Communist Party of China.

Every organization must be driven by a sense of justice and benefit. The political principle of socialist party organizations is putting the people first and serving the people, embodied in the mass line. The mass line encompasses three dimensions: everything for the people, everything relying on the people, and from the masses to the masses. It is the ideology and methodology for organizing the masses. Without an organizational process, the masses remain a rabble. Mass communication targets atomized "rabble," operating on a market-driven survival model. Western journalism theory is rooted in such political systems and mechanisms. In contrast, the Chinese Communist Party's political propaganda is a practical activity to organize the masses toward self-liberation. It involves fully mobilizing the masses to strengthen people's power, continuously solving problems while identifying them, and is a dynamic process of organizational reform and development guided by objectives, problems, and outcomes. Therefore, it inevitably manifests as communication as action-movement, fundamentally distinct from political systems under capitalism.

Relying on the masses is both an organizational principle and the Party's lifeline; the methodology is "from the masses, to the masses. "The methodology of the Village Super League is: development relies on the masses, the masses rely on mobilization, mobilization relies on activities, and activities rely on driving force—with the core being driving nationwide participation and nationwide benefit. Ultimately, it first requires the driving force of an engine to create practical activities that serve the people's interests, enabling the masses to respond to the momentum. The kinetic and potential energy of this engine determine the breadth and depth of the mass line. This resonates with Marx and Engels' classic exposition of historical materialism in *The Holy Family* (1844): "Historical activity is the work of the masses; as historical activity deepens, the ranks of the masses must expand," and "Ideas must find people who use the power of practice to realize them." History is propelled by the practice of the people and determined by correct political, organizational, and mass lines.

On June 24 and 28, 2025, Rongjiang endured consecutive catastrophic floods that engulfed the entire old city district and parts of the new city district, including the Village Super League soccer field. Two-thirds of the main urban area was submerged, presenting a severe test of survival. Officials and residents worked tirelessly day and night, with scenes of their efforts captured by locals and shared on social media. Numerous independent media outlets and mainstream media at all levels broadcasted the rebirth of a new Rongjiang from the floodwaters through multiple voices, generating massive new traffic. Precisely because of the deep social cultivation already established by the Village Super League, a fully mobilized social mechanism became the most powerful weapon to overcome the disaster—the League restarted within a month.





As rescue teams from across the nation prepared to depart, ethnic minority communities worked through the night to prepare red eggs, braided silk threads, and embroidered shoe pads according to their highest traditional customs. They adorned the rescuers' chests with colorful shoe pads and garlands of red eggs. At the

farewell ceremony, national flags fluttered proudly amidst a mix of laughter and tears, while soldiers were treated to watermelon and various delicacies. The scene of the entire county Party committee standing shoulder-to-shoulder with residents, tears streaming down their faces along the long street, was livestreamed on social media and widely shared. These images dominated trending topics on short-video platforms, creating an ever-expanding viral effect. Among the crowds bidding farewell, a common sight was the forest of raised smartphones—documenting and sharing has become a way of life in Rongjiang.



Such scenes make me ponder: if viewed globally, this could only happen in China; if seen through the lens of New China's history, this deep bond between the military and the people embodies the political DNA of 21st-century socialism with Chinese characteristics.



Unlike Western political communication centered on electoral politics, the Chinese Communist Party's tripartite approach—its political line, organizational line, and mass line—forms the bedrock of China's political communication. I call this "party-organization communication," whose mission is to serve as the voice of both the Party and the people. What does it mean to be the voice of the Party and the people? Isn't the "mass communication" of the Village Super League precisely that? It embodies Mao Zedong's concept of the Party newspaper—that newspapers must be

run by everyone, by the entire Party, and by all the people as a historical practice. It is precisely this kind of communication that serves as the engine of the Village Super League, a pioneering endeavor where the entire people run the media. The Village Super League's mass line is its greatest success—a positioning that China's mainstream media, now undergoing systemic transformation, must rediscover.

In advancing the new order of information and communication in the 21st century, how can socialists worldwide rebuild Marxist journalism and communication as a theory of historical practice? This is our shared mission.

Mao Zedong once stated: "The Long March was a manifesto, a propaganda team, and a seed-sowing machine." I have always regarded the manifesto, propaganda team, and seed-sowing machine as actions—the essence of the Marxist perspective on journalism and communication. That is, " "—practice as action is the source of communication. In this sense, communication has always been a verb; it is achieved through action and embodies historical agency. Marxist journalism and communication is communication as practice. This is precisely the Communist Party of China's perspective on propaganda, and it is also the political system and political communication with Chinese characteristics. In this sense, we must liberate "propaganda" from the stigma imposed by the victors of the Cold War. What is propaganda? In 1927, American political scientist and communication scholar Harold Lasswell, summarizing the First World War, stated: Propaganda is essentially a war of ideas against ideas. The new Cold War remains a war of ideas against ideas.

Today, as China embarks on a "new Long March," it faces renewed encirclement and obstruction amid a century of transformation. China must unite with the peoples of the Global South, follow the mass line in the Global South, and build a united front to overcome all hardships and jointly accomplish the great mission of world peace and development—an unprecedented historical task. The Red Army fears no hardship in its long march; mountains and rivers are but minor obstacles. Ultimately, the community with a shared future for mankind is a grand communication endeavor that transcends mountains and rivers, achieving mutual integration and common understanding.

History is on our side; history is on the side of the people. Justice will prevail, peace will prevail, and the people will prevail.