

The Communist Party

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY – The line running from Marx to Lenin to the foundation of the Third International and the birth of the Communist Party of Italy in Leghorn (Livorno) 1921, and from there to the struggle of the Italian Communist Left against the degeneration in Moscow and to the rejection of popular fronts and coalition of resistance groups – The tough work of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and the party organ, in contact with the working class, outside the realm of personal politics and electoralist manoeuvres

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Fascism Can Never Solve the Crisis of Capitalism: A Historical Perspective

Our party has followed the recent events in Kenosha, Wisconsin and Portland, Oregon with great political and personal interest. In Kenosha, the police maimed Jacob Blake with seven shots to the back, and a teenage reactionary murdered two protesters and wounded another. In Portland, a protester shot a fascist dead, and after a manhunt the shooter was killed by police.

In response, we republish here an excerpt from The Communist Party of Italy's Report on Fascism, presented to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922. The report demonstrates that fascism, far from rejecting capitalist democracy, is in fact a desperate attempt to preserve that system in spite of its economic and political contradictions.

We have examined the historical and social factors influencing the birth of the Fascist movement. We shall now discuss the Fascist ideology, and the programme used to draw its various adherents toward it.

Our critique leads us to the conclusion that Fascism has added nothing new to the ideology and traditional programme of bourgeois politics. Its superiority and originality consists in its organisation, its discipline and its hierarchy. But despite its exceptional military capabilities, Fascism is still left with a thorny problem it can't resolve: whilst economic crisis keeps the reasons for a revolutionary upsurge continually to the fore, Fascism is incapable of reorganising the bourgeois economic machine. Fascism, which will never be able to overcome the economic anarchy of the capitalist system, has another historical task which we may define as the struggle against political anarchy, against the anarchy of bourgeois class organisation as a political party. The different strata of the Italian ruling class have always formed political and parliamentary groups which aren't based on soundly organised parties and which have fought amongst themselves. Under the leadership of career politicians, the competition between these groups around private and local interests has led to all kinds of intrigues in the corridors of parliament. The counter-revolutionary offensive has forced the ruling class, in the realm of social struggle and government policy, to unify its forces. Fascism is the realisation of this. Placing itself above all the traditional bourgeois parties, it is gradually sapping them of their membership, replacing them in their functions and – thanks to the mistakes of the proletarian movement – managing to exploit the political power and human material of the middle classes. But it will never manage to equip itself with a practical ideology, and a programme of social and administrative reforms, which goes beyond traditional bourgeois politics; a politics which has come to nought a thousand times before.

The critical part of Fascist doctrine has no great value. It is anti-socialist and at the same time anti-democratic. As far as anti-socialism is concerned, it is clear that Fascism is the movement of the anti-democratic forces. It is therefore natural that it should declare itself against all socialistic and semi-socialistic tendencies. It is unable, however, to present any new justification of the system of private ownership and seems happy just to trot out the tired old cliché about the failure of communism in Russia. As for democracy, it is supposed to make way for the Fascist State because it failed to combat the revolutionary and anti-national tendencies. But that is just an empty phrase.

Fascism is not a tendency of the Right-wing bourgeoisie, which, basing itself upon the aristocrats, the clergy, and the high civil and military functionaries, wants to replace the democracy of a constitutional monarchy by a monarchic despotism. In reality, Fascism conducts its counter-revolutionary struggle by means of an alliance of all components of the bourgeoisie, and for this reason it is not absolutely necessary for it to destroy democratic institutions. From the Marxian point of view, this fact need by no means be considered paradoxical, as we know well that the democratic system

is nothing more than a scaffolding of false guarantees erected in order to hide the domination of the ruling class over the proletariat.

Fascism uses both reactionary violence and those demagogic sophistries by which the liberal bourgeoisie has always deceived the proletariat while assuring the supremacy of capitalist interests. When the Fascisti move from their so-called criticism of liberal Democracy to formulating their positive conception, inspired by patriotic fanaticism and a conception of a historical mission of the people, they are basing it upon a historical myth which is easily exposed, by a genuine social critique of that country of sham victories called 'Italy'. In their methods of influencing the mob, we see nothing more than an imitation of the classic posture of bourgeois democracy: when it is stated that all interests must be subordinated to the higher national interest, this just means that the principal of the collaboration of classes should be supported, whilst in practice it is just a means of protecting bourgeois institutions against the revolutionary attacks of the proletariat. Thus has liberal democracy always proceeded.

The original feature of Fascism resides in its organisation of the bourgeois party of government. Political events in the chambers of the Italian Parliament made it appear that the bourgeois State had plunged into a crisis so severe that one shove would be enough to bring it crashing down. In reality, it was just a crisis in the bourgeois governmental system, brought about by the impotence of the old political groupings and the traditional Italian political leaders, who had failed to conduct an effective counter revolutionary struggle during an acute crisis. Fascism constructed an organ capable of taking on the role of head of the State machine. But when alongside their negative anti-proletarian campaign the Fascisti try to set out a positive programme, and concrete proposals for the re-organisation of the economic life of the country and the administration of the State, all they can do is repeat the banal platitudes of democracy and social-democracy. They have provided us with no evidence of an original and coordinated programme. For example, they have always said the Fascist programme advocates a reduction of the State bureaucracy, which starting with a reduction in the number of ministers then proceeds to extend into all branches of the administration. However, if it is true that Mussolini has renounced the special railway carriage usually allotted to the Premier, he has, nevertheless, increased the number of cabinet ministers and undersecretaries in order to create jobs for his cronies.

Fascism, after temporarily flirting with republicanism, has rallied to the most strict and loyalist monarchism; after railing against parliamentary corruption, has now completely accepted conventional parliamentary procedure.

Fascism, in short, has showed so little inclination to embrace the tendencies of pure reaction that it has left plenty of room for trade-unionism. During their Rome congress in 1921, where their attempts at formulating doctrines verged on the ridiculous, they even tried to characterise Fascist trade-unionism as being predominantly a movement of the intellectual categories of workers. The lie to this self-proclaimed theoretical orientation has however been amply provided by harsh reality. Fascism, basing its trade union categories upon the use of physical violence and the "closed shop" (sanctioned by the employers with the object of breaking up the revolutionary trade unions) has not managed to extend its power to those organisations where the technical specialisation of labour is higher. Their methods have met with some success among agricultural workers and certain sections of skilled urban workers, the dock workers for example, but not amongst the more advanced and intelligent sections of the proletariat. It hasn't even provided a new impulse to the trade union organisation of office workers and artisans. There is no real substance to

Fascist syndicalism.

The programme and ideology of Fascism contains a confused mixture of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas and demands, and its systematic use of violence against the proletariat does not prevent it making use of the opportunist methods used by social democracy. This is shown in the stance of the Italian reformists whose politics, for a while, appeared to be dominated by anti-Fascist principles, and by the illusion that a bourgeois-proletarian coalition government could be formed against the Fascisti, but who today have rallied behind triumphant Fascism. This convergence is not at all paradoxical; it is derived from a particular set of circumstances and many things rendered it highly predictable. For instance, there is the d'Annunzio movement, which on the one hand is linked to Fascism, but on the other endeavours to appeal to the working class organisations on the basis of a programme, deriving from the Fiume Constitution, which claims to be based on proletarian, and even socialist, foundations.

U.S. and Chinese Imperialisms Face Off at the Taiwan Strait

Part One: The Historical Struggle for Control of Taiwan

The worsening of the crisis of world capitalism increases tensions between the two main imperialist powers: China and the United States. In addition to the trade war that did not end with the agreement signed last January, they are deployed in arms in the waters of the Pacific Ocean. The confrontation unfolds in an area that includes the East and South China Seas, the control of which is disputed, particularly in the straits and on the tiny islands which have become important strategic positions.

Also in the area is the large island of Taiwan, which plays a crucial role.

The island, following the events of the civil war fought at the end of the Second World War between the armies of the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang, still proclaims itself the "real China", as opposed to the People's Republic. But its current status, quite peculiar, should not be considered on the basis of historical or diplomatic rights, with all the consequent ideological paraphernalia, but as the product of a relationship of forces – and not between Beijing and Taipei but between the two centers of world imperialism, the People's Republic and the United States. The Taiwan issue represents an open rift in the clash between the two powers, and the ongoing skirmishes in the area reveal the fierce struggle to determine its fate, which can only be resolved by force, in the general clash between bourgeois states.

The Role of Taiwan

Although only 150 kilometers off the Chinese coast, Taiwan has belatedly developed stable relations with the mainland. Inhabited for about thirty thousand years by Austronesian peoples, it remained for centuries on the margins of the Chinese imperial power, unitary since 221 BC, which did not care about this large island, instead used by merchants and continental pirates as a refuge against the imperial center and base of their operations throughout East Asia. The Chinese Empire, which based its economy on well-organized agricultural production, had no relevant interests in maritime trade, much less expansion towards the lands beyond the surrounding seas: with its political strength it had established a subjugation of its peoples resembling

a modern tax system. Instead, it had to fear the threat of invasion by nomadic peoples from the north.

Taiwan's importance emerged with the beginning of the maritime and commercial expansion of the European powers. Dutch merchants arrived there in 1623, built fortifications there, and attempted to enslave the local population. Nascent European capitalism needed commercial bases in the Far East, but was not yet able to touch a solid and well-organized power like that of the Chinese Empire. In fact, the Dutch stay in Taiwan lasted less than forty years: in 1662, after nine months of siege, the Dutch were expelled by the forces of Koxinga, a military leader from a wealthy family of merchants also dedicated to piracy. A kingdom was born that lasted until 1683, when the Manchu dynasty of the Qing, now ruler of China, subdued the island of Taiwan.

Imperial rule over Taiwan lasted two centuries, but was unstable due to the presence of proud indigenous peoples in the mountains of the hinterland, who could never be compelled to pay imperial taxes.

When inter-imperialist pressure on the Chinese Empire led to wars, Taiwan was invaded: in 1840 by the British during the First Opium War, and by the French in 1884 in the Franco-Chinese War. Between 1894 and 1895 the island was involved in the Sino-Japanese war: with yet another "unequal treaty", the Treaty of Shimonoseki, China, in addition to renouncing any claim on Korea, ceded the Liaotung peninsula, the Pescadores Islands and Taiwan to Japan.

The Japanese ruled Taiwan for 50 years, until the end of World War II. The Taiwanese resistance displayed two different trends: Chinese nationalism and the Taiwanese self-determination movement. But the strong Japanese military was able to crush any rebellion. Under Japan, industries and infrastructures were built in Taiwan: towards the end of its rule, industrial production had overtaken agricultural production.

US Protection

With Japan's defeat in World War II, Taiwan returned to China, then ruled by the Kuomintang. The civil war between the CCP and the Kuomintang, which had fought together in an anti-Japanese alliance, soon resumed. The nationalist government of the Kuomintang, after its defeat by the armies of the CCP, which proclaimed the birth of the People's Republic on October 1, 1949, withdrew to Taiwan along with what was left of its army, the bureaucratic apparatus, and many leading lights of the Chinese bourgeoisie. Taiwan, ruled by the Kuomintang, became an independent state with the name of the Republic of China. Since 1949, Taipei has claimed the territory of mainland China and Mongolia, while Beijing considers the island of Taiwan to be its own rebel province. The PRC grants diplomatic relations only to states that do not recognize Taiwan's sovereignty.

Washington has entered this opposition, guaranteeing the existence of Taiwan against the otherwise safe aggression and annexation to the PRC. The events from 1949 to the present show that only the protective umbrella of American imperialism has prevented the PRC from extending its control over Taiwan.

The Kuomintang, in retreat, had occupied and left armed forces on the islands of Hainan, Kinmen (or Quemoy), and Matsu, a few kilometers from the Chinese coast. A few months later, between March and May 1950, Beijing launched a military operation against the island of Hainan. Although the landing was carried out by fishing boats – Maoist China did not yet have a real navy – the operation was successful, and Hainan was snatched from the nationalists, an action made possible by American non-intervention.

But with the outbreak of the war in Korea in June 1950, the United States strengthened its position by identifying the island of Taiwan as a fundamental base for operations in Asia – "an unsinkable aircraft carrier", in the words of General MacArthur. The United States imposed the "neutralization" of the Strait of Formosa and sent the Seventh Fleet there. In addition to guarantees of protection, the US began to supply Taiwan with armaments. From its

The Temporary Withdrawal of The US from The Middle East

In the Middle East as a whole, many explanations for the current arrangements come from the partial and probably temporary withdrawal of the United States from the region, which has already had significant effects.

U.S.-Iranian Co-management of Iraq

In Iraq, US forces have converged on two main bases after a reduction in personnel.

In the drone attack that at the beginning of January had caused the death of the Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, the leader of the Qods militia of the Pasdaran, the U.S. was not aiming at war with Iran and we were not mistaken in this reading and forecasting of the facts, while much of the information spoke of inevitable war. In reality there was only a demonstrative Iranian missile attack, agreed with the enemy, against two US bases in Iraq.

The elimination of Soleimani was a warning: Iran does not deceive itself into taking advantage of the partial US withdrawal, since its intact and well-oiled military power can hit you at any time, on any side and on any target. The deterrence to Iran's regional sights has been achieved with a minimum of effort. But one also thinks of the internal balances of the Tehran regime.

On the other hand, the Iranian regime continues to use the elimination of Soleimani for internal propaganda purposes: to arouse the perception of encirclement and compact the internal front, the Iranian media denounce conspiracies by the United States. In July, two Iranians were executed on charges of espionage in favour of the CIA and Mossad.

This trend, not contingent, of Washington's policy responds not to the spectacular traits of the "head" of the White House but to the need to deal with the sharing of the oil revenue.

On the other hand, behind the semblance of an all-out confrontation between Iran and the United States, there is no lack of exchanges under the counter. This explains the brutal joint co-management of Iraq from the years immediately following the second Gulf War. The appointment of the new Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi on 7 May last is a success for US policy in the area. A former opponent of Saddam Hussein's regime, he was raised by the Atlantic establishment. Since 2016 he has been head of Iraqi intelligence services. Since his inauguration al-Kadhimi has taken steps to forge better relations with Saudi Arabia, and Iraqi Finance Minister Ali Allawi has already reached an agreement to supply electricity from his powerful neighbor.

At the same time, the US has offered something in return to Iran: economic sanctions have been relaxed, with the official justification of the Covid-19 emergency, and a Luxembourg court has released Iranian accounts frozen following sanctions imposed since 2018.

But any policy of the Iraqi government cannot free the country from Iranian influence. There are major economic interests at stake and considerable trade: in the first quarter of 2020, Iraq imported \$1.45 billion worth of imports from the neighbouring country. In addition, in the current hot summer Iraq is suffering a shortage of electricity due to the drop in production by a thousand megawatts compared to last year due to the poor maintenance of some power plants. So the Iraqi Prime Minister flew to Tehran at the end of July where he signed two important contracts in the energy field: Iran will repair the electricity distribution network of the Shiite holy cities of Najaf and Karbala and

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For a Clear Distinction between Unions and Political Parties

The following speech was delivered by one of our comrades to an assembly of the Coordinamento Lavoratori e Lavoratrici Autoconvocati per l'Unità della Classe (Coordination of Autonomous Workers for the Unity of the Class) in Florence, Italy on June 27. It is, in part, a response to an initiative by the leadership of SI Cobas, a prominent rank-and-file union, to use the union to form its own political party. Our party opposes this kind of mixed union-party front because those organizations have different purposes: the union, to promote the proletariat's immediate interests; and the party, to bring the proletariat to political power and to free communist society - already historically mature - from the economic and political chains of capitalism.

Though it is based on the union and political situation in Italy, this speech contains important lessons about some of the same issues that militants face around the world. The question "what kind of unity?" is certain to appear more frequently as workers mobilize against the deprivation brought about by a deepening economic crisis.

We want to begin this assembly by returning to talk a little about our coordination.

Ours is not the only initiative that calls for unity. And it is certainly not our intention to compete with other initiatives similar to ours, which would be in blatant contradiction with our *raison d'être*.

There are, however, characteristics that we believe distinguish our coordination from most other similar initiatives. We would like to emphasize and explain these differences, not for the sake of distinguishing ourselves, but because we believe that they are the right way to achieve the common goal that we all demand: the unity of the workers.

In the meantime, it is appropriate to say that the word "unity" is one of the most abused and therefore dangerous. It must always be made clear what kind of unity we are talking about.

Typically, in the face of economic crisis, employers call for national unity, that is, unity between the workers and their exploiters, in order to pass on the effects of the crisis to the workers and defend their social privilege and political domination.

National unity is also the dogma of collaborationist trade unionism: the most recent example is the call for a "social contract" by the Secretary General of CGIL. From the years of post-war reconstruction to the supposed post COVID-19 revival, the litanies have always been that of the "social pact" between workers and bosses in "defense of the national economy".

But collaborationist trade unionism also evokes another type of unity: that of trade unions. This means unity between the three great trade unions of the regime: CGIL, CISL and UIL. This unity has as its objective the recognition on the part of the employers of the exclusive right of these unions to negotiate, and it contains a promise of social peace - in other words, the control that these unions have over the workers to prevent their fight.

Class unionism promotes the unity of the working class in terms of struggle, a struggle which, being directed against the ruling class and its political regime, breaks national unity.

Also for this reason, our coordination speaks not of mere "unity of the workers" but of "unity of action of the workers and of combative unionism". Workers' "unity of action" because, for example, we believe in general (but not absolutely) that this must be pursued also with those workers who still follow the mobilizations promoted by the regime's trade unions. This is in order to relate with them and bring them to the point of real struggle.

The "unity of action of combative trade unionism" is an indispensable tool to achieve the highest degree of unity of action among workers. Not through a mere summation of acronyms - according to a weak criticism that has been addressed to us several times - but by fighting for this objective "from below". We have learned from decades of militance that the majority of union leaders are opposed to it.

And here we come to the last important distinction that is necessary when we speak of unity, and which characterizes our coordination and the road we propose. We argue that this unity of action should be sought

among workers and among the forces of combative, class-based trade unionism, and not in the sphere of political parties. In other words, we believe that a coordination, a united front, must be of a trade union nature and not a trade union-party one. This is not because we support apolitical union action. Not at all. On the contrary, every trade union action has a political value. But political militants who are also workers active in the trade union struggle must be able to demonstrate the validity of their political orientation, to point out the most suitable practical means to fight for the immediate objectives that are of interest to workers. That is to say, they must act in the trade union struggle, which does not feed on political programs but on economic objectives and "short-term" gains in working and living conditions.

If, on the other hand, a party or an alliance of parties are included among trade union forces, the result is to inhibit workers of different political orientations, or without a political orientation, from approaching the group; and on the other hand, to provoke a boycott of the initiative by those trade union groups directed by political forces opposed to those included in the trade union-party front or coordination.

In a nutshell:

-If all the political militants who are workers make the effort to translate their political guidelines into practical terms of trade union struggle, and in this way - certainly hard and tiring - they try to gain the trust of the workers, then, on the one hand, the unity of trade union forces is possible, certainly not excluding debate and confrontation between the various directions of immediate struggle that are proposed, and on the other hand the conditions are guaranteed so that we can address a wider audience of workers.

-If, alternatively, we choose the path of mixed trade union-party fronts, what will be reflected in them will be the inevitable divisions on the party level, with the result of generating as many coordination, fronts, and pacts "for the unity of the workers" as there are parties.

This approach of ours also determines the modalities of our relationship with other initiatives that refer to the objective of unity of action of the workers, but pursue it in both trade-unionist and partisan fields. We have affirmed, and confirm again, our willingness to cooperate with these initiatives wherever and for as long as they act in the union field.

As the comrades after me will state in a more complete way, our coordination moves substantially within its limits and respecting its own strengths. That is, we responsibly avoiding taking on commitments that we are not able to handle.

On the one hand, we are promoting work on two specific topics and related initiatives, to which we invite delegates of combative trade unionism and workers who are members or non-members of trade unions. These areas are health and safety in the workplace, and the health issue.

On the other hand, our comrades fight within their respective trade union organizations for the unity of action of combative trade unionism.

Port Workers Strike in Montreal

The Montreal Longshoremen's Union (Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 375) declared a 4-day strike beginning Monday, July 27, 2020. This strike affected all activities at the Port of Montreal, and also at the shipping terminal at Contrecoeur, located west of Montreal. Local 375 represents 1,125 longshoremen, some of whom are women (25% of new hires are now women).

It should now be noted that Local 1657 of the International Longshoremen's Association, representing the auditors and counting 175 people, went on strike on Friday, July 31 to similarly paralyze Port activities. The Port of Montreal and Contrecoeur terminal operations were therefore be paralyzed for five days. Local 1657 has not used the strike as a means of pressure for 30 years.

The Maritime Employers' Association (MEA - the management) refuses to negotiate

clauses affecting job security and the jurisdiction of its employees' duties. Since the beginning of the pandemic, some employees have been working seven days a week without leave. Litigation is therefore beginning to spill over into occupational health and safety issues.

The main issue remains atypical schedules. Members at Local 375, for example, work day shifts for one week, but for the next three weeks can then be assigned to work evenings and nights. The schedule in the longshoremen's contract requires them to be available on 19 days out of 21, and this schedule has been transformed into 19 days worked out of 21. This does nothing to help with work-life balance. In this contract, employees must therefore check their schedule every evening at 6:00 p.m. in preparation for the next day and can be assigned to any task and position.

Currently, the MEA uses scabs, since anti-scab legislation is under provincial jurisdiction and the Port of Montreal's activities are under federal jurisdiction. The scabs are actually managers trained to move cargo.

The United States and The Middle East

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a substantial supply of transformers.

In the meantime, discontent continues to weave through the proletariat and semi-proletarian strata of Iraqi society. The protest demonstrations, after a partial pause due to Covid-19, have regained the urban centre of the main cities. On Sunday, July 26th in Baghdad the security forces returned to shoot and kill the protesters, two or three depending on the sources. Shortly before, al-Kadhafi, in order to remove from the government security forces the responsibility for the massacres (there have been about 600 dead since October 1, 2019, the moment of the beginning of the street protests), had affirmed that the Iranian militias had been responsible and had threatened to attack the headquarters of the pro-Iranian Shiite Katab Hezbollah militia. Evidently, it was a cynical diversion for the crowds, without even bothering Iran too much. On the other hand, both the Iraqi security apparatus and the pro-Iranian militias were responsible for the massacres and the reciprocal accusations of having spilled the blood of the Iraqi proletarians is not considered a reason for ignominy by any of the delinquent bourgeois factions involved.

A Partial Retreat

The persistent dispute between the United States and the other major oil countries, namely Russia and Saudi Arabia, has imposed a policy for the time being to avoid excessive shocks that could lead to military outlets. Of course, this has not excluded proxy wars with the direct and indirect commitment in them of the oil-producing powers for the sharing of the income. But if every war, wherever in the world it takes place, redefines to some extent or reaffirms the hierarchy among States, the last decade has marked the weakening of the influence of the United States in the Middle East, while that of Russia has increased considerably. Conspiracy to define new balances has been helped by the emergence of persistent elements of ambiguity that characterize the link between Turkey and NATO.

The so-called oil price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia that characterized the first months of this year seems a long way off, also thanks to the collapse in demand caused by Covid-19. All the big producers have given up part of their production. Saudi Arabia's production is 7.5 million barrels per day, 4.8 million barrels per day less than last year's production and the lowest in the last 20 years. So Riyadh, in order to cope with the drop in revenue, decided to increase VAT from 5 to 15%. A fact that could have serious internal repercussions.

The reasons for the partial retreat of the United States from the Middle East scenario are also linked to the changing economic cycle, with the chronic effects of the 2008 crisis. US manufacturing output is still significantly below the peak reached in 2007. Since then, US capital has sought compensation for the stagnation in domestic oil production from oil and gas exploitation from oil shale, which has contributed to an increase in production of four million barrels per day over the last four years. But, at a time when domestic production was developing, the United States, in a context of substantial stagnation in world demand, had to try to limit the production of countries that had been sidelined by wars, as in the case of Iraq and Libya, or Iran, which was facing a new phase of international isolation, partly mitigated by political and economic relations with Russia and China. But even this was not enough to keep the US economy afloat.

In the meantime, Tehran,

following Trump's unilateral break-up of the nuclear pact and the attitude of acquiescent submission of the countries of the European Union to the sanctions imposed by the United States, appears increasingly inclined to develop relations with China, which for some years now has been Iran's first trading partner with an exchange volume of 52 billion dollars. A strategic partnership agreement is now envisaged for the next 25 years. The document circulated last month and, although without an official sanction, provides a significant picture of the state of play of bilateral relations between China and Iran. The areas most affected by cooperation will be, on the one hand, energy and petrochemicals, with China becoming the main buyer of Iranian oil, and, on the other, the infrastructure in which Iran will take part in Chinese projects in the context of the New Silk Road.

The agreement also provides for military cooperation, although at least for now there is no talk of Chinese bases along the Iranian coasts of the Persian Gulf and Oman. Probably Beijing does not want to upset economic relations with Saudi Arabia and the Arab Emirates, sworn enemies of Iran but excellent trading partners of China, which buys oil from them.

The influence on the Middle East of China, the world's largest importer of oil, will only continue to grow. At the same time, Iran is also looking to Moscow, so much so that some partisans of the European Atlanticism, worried by the decline of the American influence in the region, are convinced of the birth of an alliance, including an integrated military alliance between Iran, China and Russia, aimed at redesigning the political structures of the Middle East. For the moment this possibility does not seem so close, more a need for propaganda. Like China also Russia proposes to maintain good relations also with the petro monarchies of the Gulf, archrivals of Tehran.

The diplomatic and political game of the Middle East for now is more about maintaining precarious balances than about preparing for the open armed confrontation between rival imperialist fronts.

China, the US, and Taiwan

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earliest months, the survival of nationalist Taiwan depended on the protection of American imperialism.

This condition was confirmed between 1954 and 1955 during the so-called First Crisis of the Strait of Formosa when, in response to a massive mobilization of nationalist troops on the archipelagos of Kinmen and Matsu, the People's Republic responded by bombing them. The protection of the United States took the concrete form of a Mutual Security Pact, which also gave a glimpse of the possibility of a total war with Maoist China, up to the use of atomic weapons. Faced with such a threat, Beijing stopped bombing.

The truce lasted three years: in August 1958, the Chinese army resumed striking with Quemoy artillery, starting a Second Crisis in the Strait. Along with the massive bombings, preparations for a landing also began. But, in addition to the strenuous resistance of the Nationalist army, the Americans responded by strengthening the Seventh Fleet in the waters of the Strait. Weapons, ammunition, and supplies reached the Taiwanese army. Already, towards the end of September, Beijing was forced to negotiate a truce, and on October 6 declared a unilateral ceasefire.

Hostilities between Beijing and Taipei continued until 1979, but the armed clashes were replaced by a propaganda war between the two governments. Meanwhile, in 1971, the People's Republic had achieved an important diplomatic victory, with the approval by the UN General Assembly of a resolution that withdrew the recognition of Taiwan and recognized the People's Republic as the only legitimate government of China.

In the 1970s, relations between Beijing and Washington stabilized on the basis of three conditions imposed by the People's Republic: respect for the principle of "one China", which prohibits any country from having diplomatic relations with Beijing and Taipei at the same time; cancellation of the previous mutual defense treaty between the United States and Taiwan; and withdrawal of American troops from the island. After the further rapprochement that took place in 1972, the communiqué for the normalization of bilateral relations

between the United States and mainland China arrived in 1979.

But in the same year Washington enacted the Taiwan Relations Act, a series of bilateral relations which guaranteed its security by committing to the supply of armaments. The clear ambiguity of the United States was motivated by its desire to use Beijing against Moscow, without, however, abandoning Taiwan, a fundamental pawn for maneuvers in the Far East.

In any case, towards the end of the seventies a new phase began in China that gradually led to its integration with the world economy. The new bourgeois China put aside the ardor of its early years, in need of commercial relations to give vent to the development of national capitalism. With respect to Taiwan, there was a commitment to the United States for a peaceful and long-term reunification, in exchange for the reduction of arms supplies to the island. Obviously, the proclamations of diplomacy only serve to conceal the real interests of the states, and their agreements are ready to be torn up for the needs of capital or as soon as their balance of power changes.

That pacification in the area is not possible was demonstrated by a Third Crisis of the Strait in the mid-1990s, originating from a series of Chinese missile tests between 1995 and 1996 in order to influence the first presidential elections in Taiwan. Also on this occasion the United States intervened by sending two aircraft carriers into those waters: once again China had to retrace its steps. The time for a confrontation was not yet ripe - the gap that separated it from the enormous war power of the United States was too great.

But China has continued its economic growth at a dizzying pace, and at the same time has been able to invest huge resources in the modernization of its army and navy, achieving, even if not a strength comparable to that of the United States, a rearmament capable of competing with its rival. Influence in the Western Pacific, control over "its" seas and islands is only possible by countering the military presence of the United States. In this context, Taiwan represents the main objective of Chinese expansionism: annexing Taiwan means wresting that "unsinkable aircraft carrier" off its coasts, opening the way to full control of the South and East China Seas first, then to expansion into the Pacific.


So, although China officially aims at a peaceful reunification with Taiwan, proposing the formula of "one country two systems", there are documents in which it states that one of the main purposes of its rearmament is to develop an apparatus sufficient to take Taiwan by force. And in recent times, official tones have also shown greater aggression, comparing Taiwan to separatist regions such as Xinjiang, and denouncing it as a threat to national security. The latest defense "White Paper", dated July 2019, states that it has become necessary to oppose the "independence of Taiwan". Xi Jinping himself at the 19th CCP Congress referred to Taiwan in particularly harsh tones: "Separatist efforts will be condemned by the Chinese people and punished by history [...] every inch of the territory of our great homeland cannot and must not remain separate from China". If the "resurgence of the nation" promised by China's false "communists" is to succeed in its goal of national unification, Taiwan will be the first of what nationalists in the PRC call the "six wars" that China will have to fight to regain "unredeemed" territories.

But a war for Taiwan cannot be confined to a local war, due to the nature of the place, due to the size of the states involved, because fighting for Taiwan means competing for dominance in the Pacific: there would not only be the intervention of the United States, but of all the other forces in the region interested in countering Chinese hegemony...

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