

What is Trump's final goal? Ten brief theses

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Whether it be as a result of financial over-expansion or the outcome of the contradictions of the internationalisation of finance, world capitalism harbours in its bosom a very strong tendency towards a financial crash. ... If it were to materialise, this kind of financial crash would radically upset the conjuncture through which the world is going not only in the economic sphere, but also in the political, ideological and even military domains. Were it to occur, this international financial crash would lead each and every imperialist country or bloc of countries to put its narrow interests in front of those of world capitalism and thus in all probability result in a fragmentation of the world economy. On the ideological plane neoliberalism and globalism would suffer a great defeat and the major ideological spokespeople of the bourgeoisie would once again join the ranks of a crude nationalism. As a result of this blow to international integration, the ideology of "globalisation" would evaporate. The cut-throat competition between imperialist powers would lead to a rapid change of the picture in the military domain and Europe and Japan would turn to a hasty rearmament. This kind of development would swiftly bring the world to a crossroads: either fascism and a third world war or proletarian revolution.¹

¹ Sungur Savran, "Küreselleşmemi, Uluslararasılaşmamı?" ["Globalisation or Internationalisation?"] Article in Turkish in two parts, Part 2, *Sınıf Bilinci*, No. 17, April 1997, pp. 94-95. (<https://www.devincimarksizm.net/sites/default/files/sinif-bilinci-17.pdf>)

1. When Maduro and his spouse were surgically abducted to the United States and the “Bolivarian” government of the country gave in to the *diktat* of the Trump administration, there was a fiery debate as to what Trump’s “real goal” was in carrying out this operation. Some pointed to Venezuela’s oil riches, as the country possesses the largest reserves on the face of the earth, even before Saudi Arabia, although its oil is harder to process and underinvestment for a long time seems to have left the country’s oil facilities in a sorry state. Others stressed the danger lurking behind the Venezuela operation for Cuba, Colombia, Mexico or Panama, the Trump administration threatening all these countries with intervention of different kinds in the near future. Many pointed to the publicly disclosed fact that Trump had revived the Monroe Doctrine of the nineteenth century, according to which the US declared a monopoly of dealings in the Western hemisphere as against the powers of other continents. All of these seemed to be true in their own right, but somehow left something to be wanting. Were these perhaps all intermediary goals, with the real strategic objective lying beyond? Or take the case of Greenland. Since this gigantic island belongs under a semi-autonomous agreement to Denmark, a NATO-member ally of the US, there was a lot of head-scratching to find the reason for the most unreasonable claim by Trump over the territory. Was it because of the severe competition between the great powers over the Arctic Circle, expected to rapidly become the busiest sea route between the Pacific and the Atlantic in the near future? Was it because the territory is said to possess an immense wealth of rare earth minerals, which are wildly coveted by America as against China, which has almost a monopoly of at least some of these elements? Or was it because, as Trump said later, the territory is indispensable for the so-called “Golden Dome” that the US wishes to equip itself with? Or, again, are these perhaps all part of the reality, but nonetheless only intermediary goals, the real strategic objective again lying somewhere beyond? There seems to be a missing link here, since one can go on with similar questions concerning Gaza and Canada and Panama (not to mention Nigeria, the bombing of which was probably only an entry point to the African continent). Why are there so many instances of projects or even of actions already undertaken, all geared to territory grabbing or outright military intervention under the Trump administration? After all, only a year has gone by since Trump took office on 20 January 2025.

2. Since the publication of the US National Security Strategy (henceforth US NSS) in December 2025, many have turned to that document looking for an answer to this specific question there. This expectation is blatantly misguided. The US NSS can teach everyone many things and it documents further, from the very mouth of the Trump administration, many aspects of its worldview. But it does not, and could not, include the entire strategy. This should be asserted even more forcibly. How

could an open-source document show the entire hand of the most important player of the world geostrategic scene? Absent from the document is the burning question of the future of the Arctic Circle. Absent also is the entire question of how the Trump administration is planning to engage Russia. Russia appears substantially in the document only in its relationship to Europe, relations of Russia with the US not even being so far as mentioned! And, in our opinion, the two absences are closely intertwined, for, in all probability, the real secret of Trump's seemingly whimsical relationship to Putin lies in the Arctic question. In the same vein, in our opinion, are absent from the document Canada and Greenland! If the document is blatantly silent on so many issues of burning importance, it would obviously keep its cards close to its chest when it comes to the final overall goal of US military interventions or blackmailing operations. The US National Defence Strategy document (US NDS), later published by the Pentagon, identified Greenland in the Arctic region, along with the Panama Canal, as key geographical areas of strategic importance for continuous access to the US, but again keeps its strategic cards close to its chest regarding the Arctic. Relations with Russia are again included in the document within the context of Europe and the country is described as a "continuous but controllable threat." The US's strategic orientation towards Russia is thus left ambiguous. So, no more than omens regarding single instances of brutal imperialist intervention in other countries can we expect the US NSS or the US NDS to be a source of true knowledge with respect to Trump's real goal.

3. We think that only a Marxist analysis of the world situation at this stage of history can provide for us the secret of this seemingly idiosyncratic policy. (We shall presently see that it is not as idiosyncratic as it seems at first sight.) Let us then start our inquiry by posing the following question: What is Trump an answer to? We have answered this question many times in discussions not only relating to Trump but also to leaders and parties made up of the same cloth as him. The long argument can thus be found in our earlier writings, most of them published in previous issues of *Revolutionary Marxism*. The very short answer is this: it is the Third Great Depression that has conjured up all the ghosts of fascist parties and leaders that were the reality of another epoch, the 1930s. With respect to the present situation, after almost three decades of neoliberalism and globalism, carefully prepared by the representatives of the international bourgeoisie in the 1980s through the 1990s (the Washington Consensus), the international financial system collapsed in a crash of historic dimensions in 2008 in what is now known as the "Global Financial Crisis", which then opened up a period of deep economic crisis of a "once in a century type" (dixit Alan Greenspan, longtime Governor of the US Fed, in obvious reference to the Great Depression of the 1930s). Through this change in the overall situation, it became evident to the representatives of the international bourgeoisie that the crisis

in the bosom of the world capitalist system, a legacy of the late twentieth century, cannot be overcome through international competition and cooperation. Each national fraction of the bourgeoisie decided to go it alone, at least those of countries of sizeable population and resources (imperialist ones, to be sure, but also poorer ones such as Brazil, Argentina, and India), trying to steer their own ship to the shore. This is the secret of the Trumps and the Le Pens and the Melonis and the Mileis and the Modis and the Bolsonaros. This we have explained many times, unfortunately not making ourselves heard to fellow Marxists, except for our closest comrades. Our judgment, let it be said in passing, was *not a post factum* deliberation, i.e. one after the fact, but based on a meticulous examination of the contradictions of the period that *preceded* the 2008 crash, a period that has almost universally been called “globalisation” on the basis of a totally erroneous liberal theoretical framework. (On this question, the reader may wish to consult our critique of *Empire*, the illustrious work of Antonio Negri & Michael Hardt, in the light of the history of the last quarter of a century in this issue of *Revolutionary Marxism*.) The quotation at the beginning of this piece from an article of ours that dates from 1996-1997, written in Turkish, goes to show that the diagnosis of the possibility of a depression on the horizon had been made *before* the crash of 2008 and the onset of the great depression of the twenty-first century.

4. Great depressions are both the result and the expression of the contradiction faced by the capitalist mode of production in its age of decline between the socialisation of the productive forces, which increasingly requires central planning in order to run the closely intertwined economy, on the one hand, and the system of private appropriation, which subordinates the productive forces to the incessant search for surplus-value by private capitalist entities, on the other. This contradiction has been aggravated by another between the increasing internationalisation of the capitalist economy and the unabated resilience (contra globalisation theory) of nation states. *These* are the problems to be solved by the international bourgeoisie and/or its national fractions, starting obviously with those of the imperialist countries.

5. The strategic axis for each national fraction of the bourgeoisie nowadays is more and more that of dividing the working class along national, ethnic, and racial lines. This is meant to redirect the rage and exasperation of a part of the class (the “native” sections) deriving from the catastrophic economic situation of each country towards the other part of the class (immigrant, refugee, undocumented, foreigner, latecomer, Muslim, Jewish etc.) away from those who bear the real responsibility, i.e. the capitalist class, and thus make it possible for the latter class to continue to make the working class pay for what is but the crisis of capitalism. This is why we have insisted from the beginning that these forces, including the MAGA movement and Trump himself, are fascists because using racism and nationalism to

divide the working class in order to inflict a defeat on it is *the specific attribute of fascism*. On the other hand, we have also insisted that they are *proto-fascist* forces, for a majority of them do not (yet) possess paramilitary troops, a hallmark of classical fascism of the Italian or German Nazi type.

6. The implementation of this domestic strategy is laden with difficulties and requires that the bourgeoisie have recourse to armed forces to practise coercion on the working class. This usually takes the form of a low-intensity civil war. Lacking his own paramilitary forces, Trump has resorted to ICE agents, to troops of the National Guard, and even to Marines in the Los Angeles incident. ICE is turning into the counterpart, for Trump, of the *Freikorps* in post-World War One Germany, before the formation of the SA and the SS. This is either a preliminary phase of fascist violence that will pave the way for the proper paramilitary forces of MAGA itself or will open a new road to power for the fascists, through the use of the already existing forces of the state in the service of the fascist movement. (For other countries, we need not document here the sheer strength of Marine Le Pen within the French police force, nor the incommensurate presence of fascist and pro-Nazi forces within the German police and army.)

7. The greater the possibilities of the national fraction of the bourgeoisie under scrutiny, the more ambitious the project. If Modi or his successors in the BJP or even the RSS (the paramilitary wing of the Hindutva nationalist/fascist movement) succeed to establish an outright fascist government in India, they will probably form a mortal threat to the rest of the Indian subcontinent. Or if Bolsonaro's movement, now pushing his son as his heir to the forefront, is successful in Brazil, this giant of Latin America will probably play a similar, but of course more modest role in spreading fascist power on the continent. In Europe, Le Pen and/or Meloni, for instance, are fundamentally absorbed in national questions without a Europe-wide component, although more and more a European ambition takes over those leaderships as well (for the moment organised in three different blocs of fascist and quasi-fascist parties in the European Parliament). When we reach Trump's heights, we discover that he harbours universal ambitions. The possibilities created by US strength in all domains (economic, technological, military, diplomatic, energy, R&D, cultural, popular-cultural etc.) are incomparably higher than any other imperialist country. As against globalism, Trump wishes to revive US industry and reassert US technological superiority.

8. However, re-establishing the US as the champion of the world economy will pose another question: capitalism has reached a stage in which national self-sufficiency is no longer desirable nor viable. Mega capital units (multinational companies) need new markets, new technological inputs (chips, rare earth minerals, ever newer technologies etc.), new raw materials, new investment outlets, "near-shor-

ing”, new labour force supplies or industrial reserve armies etc. The capitalist mode of production has not only *socialised* production, in the sense of large-scale units with high organic composition of capital and increasing interdependence between all branches of production, but also *internationalised* it. The world economy is now a reality out of which no country can exit durably.

9. Three decades of neoliberal and globalist experimenting has taught the bourgeoisie that the methods of the market cannot reinvigorate the capitalist world economy. Trump will try to unify the world economy and make it function harmoniously not on the basis of *market* methods but on the basis of a worldwide system of *political* domination. So, the end goal, in other words Trump’s strategic objective, is world domination. This is not equivalent to what existed before in the capitalist world economy, “hegemony” in the loose sense of the British type as in the nineteenth or of the US in the twentieth centuries. Close control of all the levers of power is what is aimed at, even if the US does not annex and swallow the rest of the world entirely. The objective requires that the US become a single world polity that is the commandeering power in every possible sense. Venezuela and Gaza are the first instances of the model that is only the initial stages of the subsumption of the rest of the world under the domination of the US. This is *an ersatz central planning process*. So, it is not the personal whims or the bottomless megalomania of Trump that creates these tendencies. It is the objective forces of history that push the concrete development of the world in that direction. It should be carefully noted that this is *not a synthesis* that would carry the contradiction of the productive forces with capitalist relations of production to a higher-level solution, but a historic *parenthesis* to avert that synthesis.

10. Because China cannot be gobbled up, (even the US NSS characterises the US-China relationship as “one between near-peers”), a Third World War is a logical necessity born of this objective situation. In practice, by the nature of things, the entire course of events will be subject to many countervailing tendencies. But unless the international proletariat and its political organisations can grasp the nature of the contradictions that mark the present epoch through revolutions that reach out to ever larger geographies to culminate in world revolution, we will never be able to stop this catastrophic descent into barbarism with modern (or postmodern!) characteristics. The proletariat, the wretched of the earth in the poor countries, and the youth have constantly displayed their readiness to fill the barricades of revolution in the first quarter of the 21st century. The crisis of humanity, then, once again reduces itself to the crisis of the international proletarian leadership.