



ASAMBLEA INTERNACIONAL DE LOS PUEBLOS
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القمة العالمية للشعوب

IPA ASIA CONFERENCE BRIEF

Hands Off Asia: A People's Call for Sovereignty and Solidarity

16-18 July, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Asia today sits at the center of a growing attack by U.S. imperialism on multiple fronts, as it struggles to maintain its hegemony over the world. What the people of Asia are facing is not a set of separate problems in different countries, but a connected system of control that uses every tool available—military, economic, political, and ideological—at the same time.

The most visible sign of U.S. imperialism is its escalating military violence in the region. The illegal war on Iran by the US and Israel, which has killed its leaders and civilians, is an open attempt to force a change of government and to punish a country for asserting its sovereignty. Meanwhile, the U.S. has expanded its military infrastructure throughout Asia, with its ring of military bases stretching from the Gulf States to Okinawa and Korea in East Asia and to the Philippines in Southeast Asia, to surround and pressure countries that refuse to bow down.

On the economic front, the IMF and Western banks are choking Asian economies through unfair loans and crushing debt. This has pushed countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan into a serious economic crisis. Politically, to hold this whole system together, the U.S. is backing far-right and authoritarian governments across the region. From the Hindu nationalists in India to the reactionary governments in Japan and the Philippines, these leaders act as local agents who silence their own people. In countries like Nepal and Bangladesh, outside forces are breaking apart left political movements and governments, weakening their attempts at pursuing independent paths for development.

Our History of Resistance

The people of Asia, however, know the cost of imperialism, and we have never simply accepted this. We remember the many historic struggles and revolutions across Asia—from Korea to Vietnam—that pushed back U.S. domination across the region. That spirit lives on today. From the people fighting U.S. bases in Japan and South Korea, to the Palestinian and Iranian people resisting war and genocide, the same fight against imperialism is being waged on many fronts.

What we need now is to bring these struggles together, both in how we understand them and in how we organize. We must call this system by its true name and offer a clear alternative that serves the people. This conference brings together social movements, progressive political parties, trade unions, and people's organizations to build a common analysis of our realities and build a shared program of action. The future of Asia must belong to its people, for that we must demand: Hands off Asia!

This conference is organized under the International Peoples' Assembly, with support from the Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research.

What We Aim to Achieve

First, to build a careful, shared understanding of the imperial attack on Asia today, seeing how its military, economic, political, and ideological parts work together as one system, instead of treating each issue separately.

Second, to create a space where movements, parties, people's organizations, and thinkers from across Asia can share their real experiences of struggle, find common patterns, and build lasting working relationships.

Third, to develop a shared program of demands. We will build on the existing Hands Off Asia campaign and its call to shut down all US military bases. We will expand it to include economic sovereignty, cancellation of unfair debt, fair trade, and the right of people to decide their own future.

Fourth, to deepen the political understanding of our organizations through study sessions that connect everyday struggles to the bigger picture of imperial domination.

Fifth, to produce a more nuanced and cohesive understanding of the imperialist onslaught conference declaration under the banner of Hands off Asia! that can guide the next stage of united anti-imperialist work across the continent.

Thematic Axes

The conference is structured around six thematic axes, each examining one dimension of the integrated system of imperial domination confronting the peoples of Asia. Together, these axes build cumulative arguments, moving from the architecture of aggression to the articulation of alternatives.

I. The Militarization of Asia and the Architecture of Confrontation

The United States is constructing a military infrastructure across Asia of a scale and ambition not seen since the Cold War. Through military pacts, arms deals, expanded bases, and integrated command structures, Washington is weaving together a regional architecture of confrontation. Recent developments include the largest joint military exercises in Philippine history, the expansion of US military logistics infrastructure in East and Southeast Asia, accelerating rearmament in Japan, unprecedented US arms transfers to Taiwan, and the construction of a regional “kill web” linking Korea, Japan, and the Philippines into a single military system directed against China, Russia, and the DPRK. This session will analyze this architecture in its totality, examining how military alliances, regional flashpoints, and the expanding US military footprint are being consolidated into a single system of encirclement against countries pursuing political and economic sovereignty, including China and Iran.

II. Hegemonic Recomposition: Regime Change, Political Destabilization, and Imperial Interference

Beyond direct military confrontation, US imperial strategy in Asia operates through subtler but no less consequential mechanisms of political destabilization and hegemonic recomposition. The post-Hasina transition in Bangladesh, which has seen the rehabilitation of the Jamaat-e-Islami, the return of BNP-aligned forces with US backing, and the instrumentalization of the student movement, represents a textbook case of externally facilitated regime change. In Nepal, the fragmentation of the left ecology through the Rashtriya Swatantra Party and allied forces constitutes a recomposition operation aimed at breaking the progressive political consensus. This session will develop an analytical framework for distinguishing between different modalities of imperial interference, from outright regime change to the more incremental recomposition of political fields, and draw on the experiences of left forces confronting these dynamics across South and Southeast Asia.

III. Debt, Tariffs, and the New Economic Siege: Sovereignty Under Assault

The economic dimension may be the most immediately devastating for the working people of Asia. The IMF and World Bank have returned with extraordinary leverage across the region: Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Laos are all operating under punishing structural adjustment program that mandate fiscal austerity, privatization of public assets, and the dismantling of subsidies and social protections. This session will examine the debt crisis, the tariff assault, and the technology blockade as interconnected instruments of economic coercion, and will explore the possibilities for independent industrial policy, regional economic cooperation, and the role of BRICS, the Belt and Road Initiative, and alternative financial architectures in creating space for economic sovereignty.

IV. The Far Right, Authoritarianism, and the Domestic Infrastructure of Empire

The rise of far-right and authoritarian forces across Asia is not incidental to the imperial conjuncture but functional to it. The Hindutva project in India, which has deepened India's strategic subordination to the United States through the Quad, defense agreements, and the abandonment of non-alignment, represents the most consequential case of how authoritarian nationalism serves as domestic infrastructure for external alignment. The rehabilitation of the Marcos dynasty in the Philippines, the return of Jamaat-e Islami in Bangladesh, the resurgence of ultranationalist currents in Japan, and the far-right movements across South and Southeast Asia share a common structural function: they discipline domestic populations, suppress progressive movements, and align national policy with imperial strategic requirements.

This session will analyze the far right not as an autonomous cultural phenomenon but as a political formation that serves specific functions within the architecture of imperial domination, and will examine the strategies movements have developed to confront it.

V. Palestine, West Asia, and Asian Solidarity Against Genocide

The genocide in Gaza and the U.S.-Israel war on Iran, including sanctions and the killing of its leaders, mark a dangerous new stage of imperial violence in West Asia, pulling in Lebanon and Yemen as well. These wars are not separate from the attack on Asia. The same weapons industry, the same military bases, the same alliances, and the same racist worldview drive all of them. The ties between Hindutva and Zionism, the Abraham Accords reaching into Asian politics, and the war on Iran as a warning to every sovereign nation that refuses to obey, all show this is one system. This session will look at the connections between Palestine, Iran, and the imperial attack on Asia, and how our movements can stand together.

VI. People's Alternatives, Resistance, and Socialist Horizons

The final session moves from understanding the problem to building a program to confront it. This means learning from the real alternatives already in practice, from Cuba and Venezuela to Vietnam and China, and from the lessons their experiences offer peoples seeking sovereignty everywhere. It also means drawing strength from the living traditions of resistance across Asia, where people's movements continue to fight for sovereignty, social transformation, and a socialist future. Building on the Hands Off Asia campaign, this session will work towards a conference declaration that calls for the closure of all foreign military bases in Asia, the cancellation of sovereign debt and rejection of IMF conditions, the right to independent industrial and trade policies free from tariff bullying, and an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Palestine and an end to the genocide and the war on Iran.

The "Hands Off Asia" conference is more than a gathering; it is a vital step toward reclaiming a continent currently caught in the crosshairs of imperialist aggression and economic coercion. By weaving together the disparate threads of military encirclement, debt traps, and political destabilization, we intend to move from reactive protest toward a proactive, unified program of popular sovereignty.

To ensure the highest level of strategic and intellectual rigor, we are planning to invite 50 intellectuals, leaders, journalists, and academicians from 20 Asian countries apart. This diverse delegation will anchor our discussions, bridging the gap between grassroots struggle and systemic analysis. Their participation will be instrumental in drafting a final conference declaration that is not only a critique of the current order but a roadmap for a liberated Asia.

Through the collective power of our social movements, trade unions, and progressive parties, we will send a clear message to the forces of hegemony: the future of this continent will be decided by its people.

Hands Off Asia!