

The Earth Defense War after the COVID-19 Pandemic:
Either SDGs or Outer Space Development?

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The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) can be seen as an Earth Defense War, which was declared by all political leaders on the Earth at the UN General Assembly in 2015, in order to protect the life of all humankind and the surrounding Earth eco-system, based on a kind of ecological humanism, and fought by all human beings as defense force. The present situation of the war is very much against the defense force and they are about to lose victory and immense lives of victims if they continue it as a business as usual.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a big shock for all human beings and people became much keener to transform the present system for the Earth defense war. Many governments introduced unconditional cash transfer and Tuvalu government even introduced a basic income policy. UNDP published a proposal paper for a kind of temporary global basic income scheme financed by suspension of foreign debt payment in order to keep the poor people stay at home.

Although most of the major transnational corporations (TNCs) are eager to promote SDGs management and investment, some are engaging in outer space development business, which has a potential to liberate the present capitalism from the limit of the Earth eco-system and SDGs. The eco-humanists had succeeded in giving the SDGs to the TNCs as a Trojan horse to play with. But the warriors in the horse should get out of the horse and grasp the capital of the TNCs in order to control the TNCs as a steady funding source of the global basic income.

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Public Consciousness in Taiwan during COVID-19: Based upon the Interviews of Twenty-two Citizens

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The storm of COVID-19 has been shaking the whole world for more than half eight months, and still no one knows how long it will continue. However, Taiwan has kept the numbers of cases under 500, and the death toll as of the middle of August was just 7. Compared to the serious situation of the rest of the world, Taiwan is somehow considered “successful” in controlling the spread of the virus without a lockdown. Even though the government of Taiwan continues the refusal of landing policy to most foreigners, people in Taiwan seem to have returned to normal life while wearing face masks, and enjoy their “stay in Taiwan” lifestyle instead of going overseas.

What are people in Taiwan thinking now? Do people feel safe from COVID-19 already? What do people feel about future of Taiwan with the storm of COVID-19? This paper attempts to portray the realities of the latest public consciousness in Taiwan through the interviews of twenty-two citizens working in different industries. There are two main factors from the interviews. First, the whole world is connected so deeply that no one can escape the fear of COVID-19 when the others are still suffering. Second, people are always trying to protect themselves from the threat and fear through hope. Hope is the way humans persevere.

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Explanations for Venezuela's Current Crisis: Separating the Credible from the Implausible

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The pressing economic and political problems facing progressive Latin American governments and the resultant setbacks in Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela and elsewhere over the recent past call for a critical analysis of the Pink Tide phenomenon. Some who analyze the governments from a leftist perspective put forward an all-encompassing critique of what they consider to be deviations from acceptable political practice as well as the failure to break out of the hold of global capitalism.

An alternative analysis presents a more balanced evaluation. On the one hand, these analysts acknowledge the inability of progressive governments to overcome the patterns and structures that hold back economic development, such as dependency in its multiple forms and rentier capitalism. On the other hand, they reject the charge that leftist governments have flagrantly and systematically violated democratic principles. Furthermore, they factor the aggressiveness originating from a disloyal opposition and foreign governments into their analysis of errors and shortcomings. This article is in line with this second, nuanced approach with regard to the breakthroughs, shortcomings and errors of Venezuela's Maduro government..

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A Study of the Issues in Contemporary Mexican Political Economy: Focusing on the Issues of "Privatization and Commodification"

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This paper examines whether Mexico's AMLO government is a regime oriented toward moving away from "accumulation by dispossession" or not. AMLO is actively pursuing massive infrastructure public works projects, large-scale development in the resource industry, and the Mayan railroad project in the Yucatan Peninsula. Local communities and indigenous peoples are campaigning against it and resisting it. They are concerned about land rights and environmental issues.

The first characteristic of the plan is that it does not promote infrastructure development, but rather promotes the development of large "special economic zones". Second, the infrastructure development may lead to a forced population shift and the result will be an increase in the flow of migrants into the slums of the metropolitan area. Third, the Mayan rail project is not only a regional development, but also the development of a corridor across the Tehuantepec isthmus from the Yucatan Peninsula. This corridor will allow for the smooth transportation of many resources, services, and goods from Mexico to the United States through the new trade agreement (USMCA). The USMCA and the Mayan Rail Project are interdependent. Fourth, the plan would alter the natural landscape and increase uncontrolled urbanization. Tourism facilities and plantation development would result in increased pollution. Fifth, the plan will likely lead to territorial restructuring and land grabbing. This could change the culture and way of life of the Mayan communities.

Mainstream analysis suggests that the plan is designed to create new jobs and industries, attract large amounts of foreign investment, increase foreign exports and inbound consumption, and promote domestic economic growth. While not denying its potential, the benefits would be concentrated in the hands of the state, the elite and investors and large corporations.

The "fourth transformation" by AMLO should have been aimed at turning away from the neoliberal development project. Nevertheless, it signed an unequal trade agreement (USMCA) with the United States. As a result, Mexico's dependence on the U.S. for production, finance, intellectual property rights, and trade will become ever stronger. The AMLO government must protect workers' rights and protect vulnerable groups in society in order to reduce social disparities. It must increase taxation of the wealthy and large corporations in order to improve social and public policies. To solve the climate change problem, the AMLO government must move away from "New Extractivism".

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