

Days hopeful & radiant

The Miami Call to Action at the FTAA Ministerial Meetings—November 17–21, 2003

Fifth Estate Collective

2003

In November 2003, Miami, Florida, is hosting both the eighth round of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) trade negotiations and the eighth Americas Business Forum. Trade Ministers from 34 nations in the Western hemisphere, and hundreds of their closest commerce-inclined friends, will descend on this city for a week of business and pleasure: the business of advancing capitalism's parasitic agenda, and the pleasure of getting away with it. This is to be our region's principal contribution to the much-heralded age of globalization.

Did somebody say “Free Trade”?

The FTAA expands the corporate free trade policies of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which applied to Canada, Mexico, and the United States, to encompass the entire Western hemisphere. It is an integral part of the logic of capitalist globalization, generating profits while at the same time accelerating the loss of workers' rights, wage decreases, the triumph of corporate agribusiness over family and subsistence farms, environmental degradation, the displacement of indigenous peoples and the privatization of public industries.

Nosotros decimos No

Much has happened since 1994: NAFTA and the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, arrived simultaneously onto the world stage—the former to destroy communities for the sake of profits, the latter to reintroduce Mexico to its indigenous glory and inspire future resistance across the world. Subsequent years saw the revival and dynamic growth of popularly organized, independent struggles to resist free-market regimes and create humane and egalitarian alternatives.

Mobilize for Miami!

Come to Miami in November, and this is what you will see: a steaming crock-pot of vibrant cultures and ethnicities where the division among classes and races are stark and deep; a tropical hub of international commerce while poverty is rampant and social exclusion is pervasive. Yes, the issues relevant to the lives of everyday residents—unemployment and underemployment, gentrification and displacement in working-class communities, unaccountable and corrupt municipal government, unlawful detention and persecution of immigrants—are common across the hemisphere.

This is the context for November. Residents of what is touted as the poorest large urban center in the United States will foot a good portion of the \$16 million it will cost to host the meetings. Further, they will be asked, for a

week, to patiently bear the militarization of the city's downtown—miles of barricades, public transportation and movement restrictions, columns of roving paramilitary—while the local and international elite go about the high-stakes business of negotiating details that will impact the lives of everyone in the hemisphere. This is where we come in.

305, take it to the house!

This is the invitation that you and 800 million of your closest friends have been waiting for. We, the undersigned groups and loose associations, are calling for creative, decentralized, autonomous actions in response to the FTAA ministerial meetings on November 20–21, 2003.

Some of the immediate goals:

- * Delay, disrupt, and topple the FTAA meetings.
- * Bury the City of Miami's hopes for flawless ministerial meetings and their plans to house the permanent FTAA Secretariat.
- * Engage in the globalization debate like our excluded brothers and sisters in the South, so that our actions resonate across the hemisphere, and we demonstrate that we can and will play a part in this struggle.

Make no mistake, Miami police chief John Timoney (of Philly RNC2000 fame) is gearing for a conflict the likes of which this city has never seen. Expect everything from infiltration and preemptive strikes, to brutal repression and trumped up charges. It is important that we begin preparing now, forming tight affinity groups, educating and mobilizing our communities, and rounding up legal, medic, and media resources. Out-of-town guests should understand that the activist infrastructure here is extremely limited; self-sufficiency is key.

As the lone anti-capitalist, non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian elements active in the South Florida mobilization, we encourage all civil disobedience, direct action, and logistical support groups to get in touch so that we may begin coordinating our efforts as best we can and in as timely a manner as possible. Our task: roll out the welcome mat. Your task: be bold, creative, strategic and unprecedented.

La lucha es larga y ellos son muchos, pero nosotros somos muchos mas. Siempre seremos muchos mas. Come to Miami in November. History beckons you. Perhaps paradise awaits...

- * 800 Million vs. 34 Coalition, Miami/Dade County, Florida
- * FTAA Wrecking Crew, Broward County, Florida
- * Running Dogs of Global Justice, Palm Beach County, Florida

For more information:

www.ftaaresistance.org

www.stopftaa.org

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