

PREFACE

ATILIO A. BORON

IT IS A GREAT pleasure to offer this compilation for the public's consideration. It consists of the speeches delivered by outstanding intellectuals, politicians and critics of the dominant thinking and of the horrors of neo-liberal globalization at the Third Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Social Sciences entitled "New Worldwide Hegemony". Options for Change and Social Movements", held in Havana, Cuba, on October 27-31, 2003, within the framework of the 21st General Assembly of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO). To Francisco de Oliveira, Samir Amin, Noam Chomsky, Robert Dahl, Perry Anderson and Armando Hart Dávalos go our most sincere thanks for their committed participation in this undertaking and for having allowed us to publish their conferences.

It goes without saying that these wonderful sessions, their intense debates and discussions, their enlightening examination of the situation in Latin America, would not have been possible without the extraordinary backing we received from the Cuban people and government, who decided to sponsor these events, the Conference and the General Assembly. Hence the debt of gratitude contracted by CLACSO toward the President of the Councils of State and of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, and through him toward the entire Cuban

people, who, overcoming all manner of obstacles, never stinted in their support for this undertaking to be successfully carried out.

We must also underline our thanks to a team, as large as it was outstanding, of Cuban colleagues of the very top rank with whom we not only drew up the academic program but also decided each of the practical matters demanded by the simultaneous unfolding of the Conference and the General Assembly. It must be pointed out that this involved not only work of a bureaucratic character but a permanent dialogue with our hosts until the achievement of the final structure of a program which, in our view, will be remembered as one of the most important events held by the social sciences in Latin America in many years. For this reason I owe very special thanks to Ricardo Alarcón, President of the Cuban National Assembly; to the Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment, Dr. Rosa Elena Simeón, whose Ministry was CLACSO's counterpart in the preparation of all events; to Abel Prieto, Culture Minister, and, in the framework of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA), to Dr. Daniel Codorniú, Deputy Prime Minister of that Ministry; to Lina Domínguez Acosta, Deputy Minister of CITMA; to Miguel Lima David, on whose shoulders fell the enormous task of organizing the operative part that enabled events such as these to unfold over the course of a week without any kind of organizational or logistical hindrances or problems. Through Miguel we also express our thanks to all members of the Cuban Organizing Committee. I also wish to state my gratitude to Dr. Daisy Rivero, president of the Cuban Scientific Committee and in her name to all colleagues and friends at the Academy of Sciences and other Cuban educational institutions that cooperated in this effort. Our sincerest admiration and gratitude are elicited by the cooperation of personalities such as Roberto Fernández Retamar, Armando Hart Dávalos, Yolanda Ricardo and Roberto Verrier, and many other colleagues, so many that we cannot name them all but who are those who, from the Cuban side, made it possible to achieve this aspiration of having a very good Assembly that would combine CLACSO's institutional and administrative matters with issues of a substantive nature having extraordinary practical importance for the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Naturally, all the above also enjoyed inestimable support and cooperation originating in other sources. I therefore wish to thank UNESCO in the person of the Director of UNESCO's Office for the Social Sciences in Latin America, with headquarters in Mexico, Dr.

Gonzalo Abad, and in that of its representative of the general office for Culture with headquarters in Havana, Francisco Lacayo Parajón, who from the initial moments of this entire process offered us inestimable help. In addition to this cooperation offered by UNESCO –which is somewhat like CLACSO’s mother institution since, although we won’t formally belong to the United Nations system, we hold the status of “permanent consultative agency” of that organization– other institutions must be mentioned here since their cooperation was fundamental for ensuring that this event could be carried out.

In the first place, we must thank the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), which for a long time has been supporting the work in the field of social sciences not only of CLACSO but also of other sister institutions in Latin America. At a time when military dictatorships seemed on the verge of putting an end to social sciences in this region, when those régimes persecuted, caused the disappearance of, or murdered our social scientists, a specialized department of SIDA –we refer to SAREC– performed an essential role not only for avoiding the collapse of social sciences in the region but also for saving the lives of our colleagues. Suffice it to recall that the number of social scientists who in the 1970s were forced to leave their countries is calculated at 2,000, and the cooperation of SIDA was absolutely decisive to make viable a rescue operation of this magnitude. SIDA has continued to support the social sciences in Latin America and the Caribbean in the new, democratic stage, in which the threats come mainly from the angle of the financial asphyxiation that affects research and higher learning institutions in our countries. For this reason we wish to express the most sincere gratitude of the community of social scientists to its representatives at this meeting, Ms. Berit Olson and Mr. Anders Gerdin, for their unshakable support over the course of so many years.

I wish to state the same with regard to the contribution of new friends who have sponsored the development of critical thinking in this region. In this case we are referring to NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, here represented in the person of Lill Ann Medina, which at a recent date has begun a program of cooperation with CLACSO to develop a series of projects aimed at improving the quality of the research into poverty in Latin America. It is indeed insufficient to identify the existence of a problem; overcoming it also requires developing the most appropriate methodologies that enable a precise analysis of the complex, manifold and very vari-

able situation presented by poverty in our countries. For this reason I thank NORAD for its help and also, in this sense, very especially, a dear friend of social scientists in Latin America, because the cooperation program with NORAD has a fundamental academic component and this component is offered by CROP, the Comparative Research Program on Poverty headquartered in Bergen, Norway, whose director, founder and inspiring genius is Prof. Else Oyen. Else has been cooperating with CLACSO for several years, giving material form to this assistance with the help of NORAD. We shall continue to work along these lines for a long time given the success of this program and its importance for the social sciences in the region.

Lastly, allow me to say that this special mention directed at these friendly institutions, UNESCO as well as the diverse cooperation agencies of the Scandinavian countries, fundamentally in Sweden and Norway (SIDA and NORAD), would be incomplete if I didn't thank the staff of CLACSO's Executive Secretariat that has worked side by side with its Cuban counterpart and that thanks to its huge and unflagging enthusiasm and total identification with CLACSO's institutional project gave its all to cause this event to happen. I thus wish to express my gratitude to its members for this exemplary dedication, not only in my own name, as Executive Secretary, but in the name of all the social scientists gathered in this convention.

Buenos Aires, April 2004

THE DILEMMAS OF DOMINANCE

NOAM CHOMSKY*

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS my appreciation for the opportunity to take part in the conference and also to visit Cuba for the first time, much too long delayed, but I am very pleased to be here and pleased that you are all here as well.

A new doctrine

A year ago, in September 2002, several events took place of considerable significance, which cast a long shadow over world affairs. The first was the declaration of the national security strategy of the Bush administration. This announced in effect that the United States intends to dominate the world permanently by force if necessary –force is the one dimension in which the United States reigns completely supreme– and also announced the pretension to eliminate any potential challenge to its rule. This caused quite a reaction in the world. Not because it was new. In fact it is not new; there are many

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precedents as back as the early stages of World War II even before the United States entered the war. In those early days it was understood by US leaders that the war would end with the United States in a world dominant position and there were high-level meetings of State Department planners and experts on the Council on Foreign Relations, the main non-governmental foreign relations institution. And they issued some very important studies the basic theme of which was announced in 1941, concluding that the long term goal, I am quoting it now, was for the United States to hold unquestioned power in the post-war world and to act to ensure the limitation of sovereignty by any state that might interfere with the policy of achieving military and economic supremacy for the United States, and then followed elaborate plans so as to implement those ideas. And in subsequent years similar materials appeared in internal documents and sometimes even in public documents, but what was different last September was that the declaration was so brazen and so extreme and that it was so defiant of world opinion and was a warning to the world that you'd better watch out. And that is the difference. The predecessors were intended for elite discussion or general plans, nothing like this. That is the first of the major events that took place and should be taken into account.

The declaration was followed at once by a series of actions to implement the Bush doctrine. That included the announcement of quite remarkable military plans and immediate steps that were taken to undermine any international agreements that might impede the realization of the plans that were announced. I don't have enough time, but they are quite interesting, and also unknown –almost unknown– because although they were public they were not reported so the population doesn't know about them, except for people that pay special attention to these things. One of the steps that were taken to implement the national security doctrine, however, was very publicly announced, loud and clear; and that was the intention to invade Iraq. It was understood at once that the invasion of Iraq was to be what is sometimes called an exemplary action to demonstrate that the doctrine, the security doctrine, was intended very seriously, wasn't just words; it was going to be acted upon and it would be implemented at will, without any credible pretext and without the intervention of any international authority –that's crucial. The national security strategy itself barely mentions international law, or international institutions. Washington made it very clear to the Security Council right away that

it could be relevant –that’s the term that was used– it could be relevant if it gave its stamp of approval to actions that the US was going to carry out, whether it approved them or not; and if it refused to “be relevant” then it would be a “debating society”, merely an organ in which subjects are discussed without any influence on operational decisions. That’s what Colin Powell, the Bush administration’s “moderate,” explained. A few months later, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Powell said that the main issue at the World Economic Forum was Iraq, which generated a very grim and gloomy mood. Colin Powell was sent as the administration’s emissary and he informed at the World Economic Forum that, in his words, “the United States has the sovereign right to use military force and when we feel strongly about something we will lead and we will lead even if no one is following, as in this case”. That elicited very hostile reactions from the “masters of the universe” as the business press calls the people gathered in Davos, with only a slight touch of irony. These reactions are important facts to remember and think of when thinking of the evolving world system.

The electoral strategy and the art of “taming the beast”

Another crucial event of September 2002 was the opening of the mid-term election campaign, which is closely related. The Bush administration has a very fragile hold on political power; the population is generally opposed to its domestic policies, which is not very surprising –the policies are harmful to the general population and they also transfer enormous costs to future generations. The Republican campaign managers are well aware of this. The leading figure, maybe the most important person in Washington, is Karl Rove who heads the campaign committee, and he informed Republican Party activists that for the coming election, the November 2002 election, they would have to emphasize national security issues and suppress social and economic policies. And for the election it just barely worked. They manage to win the election by an extremely small margin of a few tens of thousands of votes; polls showed that voter preferences remained unchanged but their priorities shifted.

Enough people to win the election huddled under the umbrella of power in fear of the demonic enemy that was constructed by a

remarkable government media propaganda campaign that began in September and within a few weeks polls revealed that American opinion had been driven far off the international spectrum. Later studies and in greater depth showed the extraordinary misperceptions among the public, and the misperceptions are strongly coordinated with support for the invasion, which is not very surprising. I would've supported the invasion myself if I thought that Iraq was an imminent threat to the survival of the United States and that it was responsible for September 11's atrocities, that it was closely linked to Al-Qaeda which is surely planning new terrorists attacks. And that's why the invasion had considerable global support. All of these beliefs are really widely held in the United States and of course all are completely outlandish and held nowhere else.

Well, all of this illustrates one of the dilemmas of dominance, how do you control the population, how do you tame the great beast, as Alexander Hamilton described the people –that's the problem, always. And it's particularly difficult when leaders are committed to policies that are harmful, that harm and endanger the beast. There is only one effective way that's known to carry this task ahead and that is to inspire fear, and it often works. That in fact is second nature to the people who are now running Washington; most of them are recycled from the Reagan and first Bush administration, from their most reactionary sectors, and that's the way they managed to hold power for 12 years.

The instructive nature of “exemplary actions”

Well, let's go back to another of the major events of September 2002. We have mentioned the national security strategy announcement and the invasion of Iraq. As I said, it was understood at once that the invasion was to be an “exemplary action”, that it was intended to instruct the world that they would have to put aside considerations of national interests and international law and they would have to act in support of America's goals. I happen to be quoting the noted Middle East historian Roger Owen of Harvard University but this was widely understood. Opposition to the war in the world –and in fact in the United States as well– was unprecedented, and a large part of the opposition I am sure was based on recognition that Iraq was, quoting *The New York Times*, was the first test case of the national security strategy, and certainly not the last. It was the Petri dish for an

experiment in pre-emptive policy –that’s the *Times*’ report after the war was over. It’s not quite accurate, the term pre-emptive which is commonly used is incorrect; pre-emptive action means something in international law, it’s applied to situations on the verge of illegality in accordance with the UN Charter, which does grant the right of self-defense against imminent, overwhelming attack when there’s no time for deliberation and diplomacy. Countries are permitted to react in self-defense until the Security Council has the chance to intervene. That’s pre-emptive war; this policy has absolutely nothing to do with pre-emptive war, and the term should not be used. Sometimes in more technical literature in international relations or international legal literature it is called preventive war or anticipatory self-defense, those terms are not so obviously false but they are also incorrect. Nothing was prevented by the invasion of Iraq and there was no self-defense anticipated. The presidential declaration permits the use of force against constructed threats, or invented threats, or imagined ones. In fact all of these terms are just euphemisms for what was called the Supreme Crime at Nuremberg, the crime of aggression. And that is also understood.

As the bombing of Iraq began the well-known historian and former Kennedy adviser Arthur Schlesinger wrote an article in which he recalled Franklin Roosevelt’s description of the bombing of Pearl Harbor as a date that will live in infamy; and “president Roosevelt was correct”, Schlesinger wrote, “but today it is we Americans who live in infamy as the government follows the policies of imperial Japan”. This kind of commentary is also unprecedented and right in the mainstream, in important parts of the mainstream. In fact the national security strategy and its implementation aroused much concern around the world including among the foreign policy elite at home as this quote illustrates, and these too are important facts, like the reaction of the World Economic Forum. In the major establishment journal, *Foreign Affairs*, the issue after the declaration of the security strategy featured an article by a well-known international relations specialist, John Ikenberry, in which he discussed what he called the “New Imperial Grand Strategy”, and he was quite critical of it and concluded that it poses a great danger to the world and to the United States, including the likelihood of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of terror as a deterrent to US aggression. Another leading specialist made the same point and it’s pretty obvious: “if you announce to someone you’re going to attack them, they don’t say please attack

me, they try to work out some way to defend themselves". The Iraq war also was accompanied by the same warnings. US and British intelligence agencies, others in the world and independent analysts warned that the likely consequences of the Iraq war were proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terror. And after the invasion the same sources reported that those predictions were apparently verified. Intelligence reported that the Iraq invasion was causing a huge setback for the war on terror; it led to a sharp peak in recruitment for terrorist groups and in fact Iraq became a terrorist haven for the first time as was pointed out by Harvard University's leading specialist Jessica Stern. With regard to proliferation, specialists on Iran and North Korea pointed out right away that the invasion probably stimulated their more active efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction, and if true that's not unprecedented either. In 1981 Israel bombed the Iraqi nuclear facilities, Iraq's reactors, under the pretext that they were developing nuclear weapons; in fact it turned out, according to inspection by US physicists, including the head of Harvard's physics department, that there were no facilities for developing nuclear weapons but the bombing did have the consequence of leading Iraq to institute and accelerate a program to try to develop nuclear weapons. Again the logic is pretty obvious, the consequences one expect.

The dispersal of the monopoly of violence

Well, that poses another one of the dilemmas of dominance. Violence may intimidate some but is likely to incite others either to revenge or to deterrence. And since no one can hope to compete with the United States in military force –the United States already spends about as much as the rest of the world combined in military expenditures and is far more advanced technologically in military terms, so that kind of reaction is impossible– potential victims will turn to the "weapons of the weak", which are weapons of mass destruction and terror. Those are available to the less powerful, much less powerful. And sooner or later weapons of mass destruction and terror will become united, very few people doubt that and the prospects are quite horrendous, there are high-level US government-sponsored studies that go into in some detail as to the likely consequences, most of them not preventable. This was internally known long before September 11 through the 1990s. There're technical studies and others warning that the powerful have lost their monopoly of vio-

lence. They still have an enormous preponderance but no longer monopoly and that difference is significant, that's one of the reasons why September 11 was so shattering to the United States and Europe. And the reaction in much of the rest of the world was, "this is horrible but welcome to the club; this is what you've been doing to us for hundreds of years. We are sorry about the attacked on you, but it is not particularly novel". That's the meaning of the loss of a monopoly of violence to which the powerful have been accustomed. This was certainly known in, since 1993. In 1993, there was an attempt to blow up the World Trade Center with much more ambition and came very close to succeeding. With somewhat better planning it would have killed tens of thousands of people according to the building engineers. That was carried out by people who were apprehended and they were closely related to Al-Qaeda-type organizations, trained by the US and its associates in Afghanistan in the 1980s. And the leader of it was apparently brought to the United States by the CIA and was kept there under CIA protection. For sure, at the same time that they were trying to blow up the World Trade Center Clinton was sending Al-Qaeda activists and Hezbollah activists to the Balkans to fight on the US side of the Balkans war, which happened to be at the same time. But since 1993 it's been obvious to anyone who reads the newspaper that horrendous terrorist atrocities of these kinds are possible and it's just a matter of time before they happen.

Terrible as the September 11 attacks were they don't actually change the risk analysis; the risk analysis remains the same. It was already there, and the fact that it was realized basically doesn't change anything, except, you know, for the atrocities itself. Well all of this is perfectly well known to administration planners, it's not a secret to anybody. They know all of this just as well as the establishment's critics and they are now keeping their debates within the establishment, within very narrow circles. The administration understands surely that the actions that they are announcing and taking increase the threat to the security of the American people and the world, and they don't want that consequence, but it's just not a high priority, there are other priorities that are much higher, such as global dominance and the domestic programs of rolling back the progressive legislation of the past century and beating back what business leaders call the rising political power of the masses. Business literature happens often to be rather like "vulgar Marxism" in its terminology, as do internal documents; different values but the same ideas.

The current leadership is extremist in pursuing these goals but the spectrum of ideas is narrow, and that's important to understand.

The elite criticism is unprecedented in its intensity, but much of it is based on a recognition that the policies may prove very harmful to the interests of power and privilege. The people who own the world don't want to lose it and these policies may destroy it. The criticism is also based on the belief that there are safer and more effective means to achieve pretty much the same goals.

A good illustration of it was discussed last night¹ and you all know about it; it is Brazil. Forty years ago Brazil had a slightly populist president with some degree of popular support and that was enough of a danger for the Kennedy administration to instigate a military coup which established the first of the “national security states”, the neo-Nazi states that then swept through the hemisphere. Well, today Brazil has a far more impressive and far more radical president who was elected with enormous support from mass organizations that have developed in the past 20 years, but there is no talk of a military coup. The reasons could be several, but one reason is that it's simply not needed.

Neoliberalism² and the corrosion of democracy

As regards the economic consequences of the neoliberal measures of the past 30 years, the economic effects are debatable, but it is clearly understood that these measures undermine democracy; they essentially make it impossible. That was understood 70 years ago by John Maynard Keynes, who pointed out that the experiment in democratic self-government is endangered by the global international financial markets. And therefore the post-war economic system, post Second World War economic system, which was designed by Keynes and the US representative Harry Dexter White, was based on the principle that if you have free flow of capitals and free speculation against currencies

¹ See Francisco de Oliveira's article in this book.

² Since the word *neoliberalism* does not appear in many conventional English language dictionaries a little explanatory note is in order. Throughout this book *neoliberalism* refers to this new term introduced in the public discourse in the last ten or fifteen years. It refers to a unique blend of “neoclassical” economics -with its exaltation of unfettered free-markets and its reciprocal condemnation of any form of state intervention aimed at reducing the damages produced by social Darwinism- and neoconservative politics, with its emphasis on strong authority, religion, traditional values, and political restraint. The economic policies of *neoliberalism* are properly condensed in the Decalogue of the Washington Consensus and the “official line” of the IMF, the WB and the WTO. Despite some minor differences, its politics are exemplarily synthesized in the whole array of domestic and international initiatives of governments such as Bush Jr.'s in the US, Aznar's in Spain, and Blair's in the United Kingdom. Therefore, the term should not be confused with the word “liberal” in its American meaning.

states can't do anything because the economy can be destroyed, and also the principle that currencies must be pretty closely regulated; they stay within narrow bands so there won't be speculation against currencies. The first of the major steps that dismantled this system 30 years ago freed financial capital flows, and thus comes the predicted danger than may have destroyed the experiment in democratic self government. As these measures intensified and increased, they narrowed the possibilities for governments to undertake policies because policies are really determined by what is sometimes call the virtual parliament of investors and lenders who decide what policies they accept and if they don't like them they destroy the currency, undermine the economy and so on. Now, that's all been well understood for years and other elements of the neoliberal program also have this consequence; take privatization, which is a mantra of neoliberalism. There was no economic justification for privatization, but here's a very good political motivation: privatization reduces the public arena by definition, it transfers decisions from the public arena into the hands of unaccountable private tyrannies, which is what corporations are. And that by definition again undermines democracy. The privatization of services is now under negotiation; that, essentially, if carried out, reduces the public arena to virtually nothing. It reduces it so drastically that formal democracy can be tolerated, in fact introduced without undue concern that it might have any effects. Well, it's been widely observed that the extension of formal democracy in Latin America in recent years has been accompanied by a steady lack of faith in democracy. The reasons for that were pointed out by Atilio Boron. Years ago, namely, the extension of formal democracy coincided with the extension of neoliberal policies which undermined functioning democracy; and indeed were designed for that purpose. I mean, nobody says it, but it cannot be that people who apply them don't understand these simple points which were obvious to Keynes and otherwise true virtually by definition.

Well, many of the establishment critics of the Bush administration's extremism much prefer the softer measures for taming the beast, less dangerous ones. At home as well; there is a domestic analogue. It is also worth keeping very much in mind that the grim forecasts that are expressed here are largely shared by government planners across the spectrum. Samir Amin³ spoke yesterday of what he called "the trend toward apartheid on a global scale". And the US intelligence and

3 See Samir Amin's article in this book.

US military planners have similar expectations; they use a different terminology and they apply the policies that they expect to have these consequences instead of opposing them, but the analysis is approximately the same, so US intelligence and military planners –I am quoting– predict that globalization, meaning the neo-liberal style of globalization, will lead to a widening economic divide between the haves and the have-nots and that deepening economic stagnation, political instability and cultural alienation will lead to unrest and violence among the have-nots, much of it directed against the United States, perceived as the source of what they are suffering. This analysis happened to be from the Clinton administration, not the Bush administration; which again illustrates that the conceptions are widely shared. And military planning is in fact geared to this eventuality, quite explicitly. There is a domestic analogue; probably this view lies at the heart of the sharp increase in criminalization. In fact, throughout the neoliberal period the increase in jailings centered on the people who in Latin America are sometimes called disposable, the targets of “social cleansing”. The United States is more civilized; instead of murdering them you put them in jail, and this goes on right along with the neoliberal period. Clinton increased the numbers by about 50%. Well, all of this leads us back to the first dilemma: how do you control the population, the ones who are bearing the costs and the risks?

How to win the presidential elections of 2004?

A specific problem right now is how to win the coming election, the 2004 election. Well, if you want to know that's done, go back to May 1st., 2003: recall the carefully staged performance in which President Bush landed on an aircraft carrier, placed in such a way that you get the right television pictures, wearing combat gear, helmet and so on; he was an object of ridicule and fear around the world but it was taken quite seriously in the United States. On its front page –I don't know if it was meant seriously– the front page report in the *New York Times* described his victory speech as a powerful Reagan-like finale. Coming back to the meaning of this, the more astute observers described the event as the opening of the 2004 presidential campaign which will be built on national security themes. That was the *Wall Street Journal* report.

And Karl Rove, the campaign manager, made that clear; he said the theme of the coming election will be the battle of Iraq, emphasizing

ing “battle”, and not the war. The war will go on, the war is the war on terror, and that must continue because there is no other way to frighten the population into obedience, and if it happens to have negative consequences like the destruction of the country, that’s one of the costs you have to face. President Bush and his victory speech declared victory in a war on terror by removing an ally of Al-Qaeda; it’s immaterial that no competent observer including the CIA believes a single word of this. It’s a higher truth and therefore facts are irrelevant, including the fact that the only known connection between Iraq and terror is that the invasion apparently increased the threat of terror exactly as had been predicted, but it makes no difference and it continues. So a few weeks ago and in his regular weekly radio address the president announced that the world is safer today because their coalition ended the regime that cultivated ties to terror while it built weapons of mass destruction. That was a few weeks ago. Bush’s speechwriters and minders know very well that all of these are complete fabrications but they also know that if you repeat them often and often loudly enough they just become truth. They didn’t invent that but they know it, and it works. It works at least temporarily; it worked last September, September 2002. Within a few weeks about 60% of the population believed that Iraq was a threat to the security of the United States. No one in the world believed that, including Kuwait which had every reason to fear Saddam Hussein. He invaded them; they would’ve liked to tear him to shreds, but they didn’t regard Iraq as a threat –they knew that Iraq was the weakest country in the region, that it had been devastated by criminal sanctions. It was essentially disarmed, otherwise the United States would not have been willing to attack it. There was a horrible monster running it but not a threat to anyone, and in fact Kuwait had joined other countries in the region in trying to integrate Iraq back into their own regional system over strong US objections. But in the United States it was believed. Congress a few weeks later passed a resolution authorizing the president to use force because of the threat to the security of the United States posed by the government of Iraq. The press and intellectuals were kind enough not to remind us that Congress was repeating a script that is familiar. In 1985, President Reagan already declared the national emergency in the United States –pretty serious– because of what he called the unusual and extraordinary threat to the security of the United States posed by the government of Nicaragua, which was only two days’ driving time from Texas, so Americans had to tremble and fear before the Nicaraguan hordes who posed an unusual

and extraordinary threat, much worse than Saddam Hussein. And in fact all of this helps explain Karl Rove's confidence that they can carry it off in the coming election. Let's go back now to the powerful Reagan-like triumphalism reflected in Bush's victory speech.

Well, that's referring to Ronald Reagan's victory speech when he informed the country that "we are again standing tall" having conquered Grenada, overcoming the resistance of a few dozen construction workers with six thousand special forces who got eight thousand medals of gold during the invasion. So we were standing tall and the powerful Reaganian finale on the first of May, on the aircraft carrier, was a recollection of that grand moment of modern history.

Well, that went on right through the 1980s. Every year there was some new scare. Libyan hitmen were wandering the streets of Washington to assassinate our leader, part of Libya's campaign to expel America from the world. Reagan said Grenadan and Nicaraguan crime in the streets were a threat to our existence. The first president Bush won the 1988 election basically by playing the race card, by appealing to the threat of the black criminal, who's going to rape your sister unless you elect me. The drug scare works about the same; drugs and crime in the United States are about the same as in other industrial societies, but fear of crime and drugs, which is manipulated, is much higher, and it has its effects. The method worked for about 12 years, exactly 12 years that the administration was able to stay in office, even though the population was quite strongly opposed to its policies which again did harm most people. In fact, by 1992 Reagan was considered the most unpopular living ex president, right next to Nixon, and far more so than Carter and Ford. Well, so they want to replay the same script, not surprisingly –it worked well before, let's try it again.

The stake on world domination

All the above is fundamental for the dominant group in the United States. And a lot is at stake in the current situation. Internationally one stake is world domination, which is not a small minor goal. And also control over Middle East oil. The expectation I presume is that the United States will end up with military bases in Iraq, stable bases right at the heart of the oil producing region for the first time, in a client state, a state which will be called free and independent and even democratic, but in secret will be described the way the British in secret

described their colonial domains. It will be run by what the British called an Arab façade, behind which Britain effectively ruled. That's pretty much the way the United States has run its own backyard, Central America and Caribbean, for a hundred years, and it's familiar in the history of imperialism. It's particularly important in the Middle East. Back in 1945 the State Department recognized that particularly the oil of the Gulf region is a stupendous source of strategic power and one of the greatest "material" prizes in world history. That's not a small thing and the US must of course control it; that has been a leading theme of post-war history. The same intelligence predictions that I have mentioned before had anticipated that the Gulf region will provide about two thirds of the energy resources of the world in the next generation. And therefore the US must control them. Notice that control doesn't mean access—it doesn't matter whether the US uses the oil, in fact if the US shifted to solar energy it will still have to control the oil. In fact they predict and anticipate that the US itself will rely on more stable Atlantic basin resources, West Africa and the Western hemisphere, fundamentally Canada, Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia—and that is part of the reason for the great concern about the conflicts in the Andean region. But even though the US won't particularly access Middle East oil itself, it wants to control it. This stupendous source of strategic power remains and as US planners pointed out 50 years ago, controlling it gives what they call veto power over what other governments may do. So there's a very powerful international interest at stake and there are also powerful domestic interests.

The Bush administration people are not conservatives, they are radical statist reactionaries, which is something quite different. Their policies right away included a huge increase in federal spending, in fact the biggest increase since the Reagan administration came in, that is since they came in the first time, combined with a massive tax cut for the rich, and the consequences of that are perfectly obvious. It leads to what economists call a fiscal derailment. In fact, the government own economists now estimate unpayable bills of approximately 45 trillion dollars, which is about six times the total gross domestic product. The presidential spokesman was asked about that in a press conference and he responded that yes, it is correct, and therefore Congress will have to be responsible in dealing with Medicare, the health programs (limited but that do exist), Social Security and other programs for the population, and when he said they have to be responsible he didn't mean fund them with progressive taxation, he

meant destroy them. And that's the point. The point is this phrase, which comes from the budget director of the first Reagan administration: we have to starve the beast, we have to starve those parts of the government that serve the general public. You can't run for office by saying I want to eliminate health care, security, schools, roads and so on, but you can run for office saying, well, I'm sorry but we have a huge unpayable debt of 45 trillion dollars so we just can't fund any of those things but of course we can still continue to fund and in fact expand those parts of the government that serve the powerful and the privileged. That's essentially the program and it's not very secret. The heart of that is military spending but you have to remember about military spending that its purpose and its function, to a substantial extent, is domestic: it provides a cover for the development of the technology of the future. If you use a computer and the internet and telecommunications and so on you are enjoying the results of decades of transfer of cost and risk to the public under the pretext of national defense, so that then the results can be turned over to private corporations for profit and that has been true –that's true for almost the entire so-called "new economy" and it's also planned for the economy of the future. That's also one of the many respects in which the rich and powerful wouldn't dream of participating in market systems. "Markets are for the poor and defenseless, not for the rich". That's essentially the script followed, in its most extreme form, in the past but familiar now too. And there is only one method to get the public to pay the costs, take the risks, suffer the consequences; and that is to press the panic bottom.

The Old and the New Europe

Well, there are other dilemmas of dominance. One of them, a crucial one, is controlling other major power centers. The most spectacular achievement of the propaganda campaign of the past year has not, in my opinion, been in creating fantastic images of Iraq, not that that wasn't spectacular enough, but there was something more dramatic, namely the admiration for the president's inspiring vision of bringing democracy to the Middle East, tribute to a "yearning for democracy" as some press commentators described it. This noble presidential vision proceeded right alongside the most remarkable display of hatred and contempt for democracy that I have ever seen. I can't recall

any counterpart. And the two went side by side with, as far as I can see, no comment. An illustration of what I mean is for example the distinction between the Old and the New Europe that was the main theme of the early part of the year. Old Europe: Germany and France are the bad guys, the ones we hate and rival. New Europe: Berlusconi and Aznar and the former Russian satellites so we admire for their marvelous achievements. What's the criterion that distinguishes New Europe from Old Europe? Well, it's absolutely clear and definitive. Old Europe, the bad Europe, were the countries where the governments took the same position as the overwhelming majority of their population. New Europe were the countries where the governments overruled an even larger proportion of their population. The criterion was absolutely explicit –you couldn't say more dramatically "I hate and despise democracy". Maybe the most extreme, most dramatic example was Turkey. Everyone was surprised the Turkish government took the same position as 95% of the population, and they were bitterly condemned for lacking democratic credentials –this is actually the word it was used. Paul Wolfowitz, who was supposed to be the great visionary, even condemned the Turkish military because they didn't intervene to prevent the government from taking the same position as 95% of the population and he urged them, meaning ordered them, to apologize to the United States for this departure from democratic credentials, and to agree to help the United States. All of this went on almost without comment. Although some of the commentaries were absolutely amazing. Such prominent intellectuals as Robert Kagan condemned what he called the paranoid conspiratorial anti-Americanism of Old Europe and its feverish intensity –meaning how can Europeans fail to comprehend that we are noble and that their task is to serve us. Fortunately there were enlightened figures like Berlusconi and Aznar who understood that and the same was true in the former Russian satellites, where they have experience in the matter.

The highest achiever among them is Latvia. The former foreign minister was asked why the Latvian government supported the United States even though the population was overwhelmingly opposed, and he gave the right answer. He said: "We have to salute and shout, 'Yes, sir!,' we have to please America, that will demonstrate our democratic credentials". All of this went on without comment by the press that witnessed this vision of democracy. That's quite an achievement. I don't think many totalitarian states could achieve that kind of propaganda effect. Well, the hatred and fear of Old Europe, France and

Germany particularly, that had much deeper reasons than the visceral fear and contempt for democracy. Ever since World War II there has been a considerable concern that Europe might go on an independent course. During the Cold War this was called the “fear of a third force”. There’s no time to talk about it but there’s quite an interesting history that is coming out of the US and Russian archive records, about this interplay through the 50s and the 60s. The appearance of a third force has been a major concern all along.

The year 1973, 30 years ago, was the year of what should be called and in Latin America is often called the other 9/11. That’s the September 11 coup that overthrew Allende, killing several thousand people, the equivalent of maybe 60 thousand in the United States by conservative estimate. That 9/11 as you know was strongly supported and partly instigated by the United States and Kissinger expressed its reasons. The reasons were that Allende’s victory could be a virus that would spread contagion, not just through Latin America but through Southern Europe –it would send the message that there can be a peaceful road to some form of social democracy and independence and that is unacceptable. In fact at the very same time in Southern Europe the United States was carrying out extensive subversion similar to Chile’s particularly in Italy. Major CIA operations had been going on; in fact they’d been going out since 1947, and they were going on in the early 70s, to prevent Italian democracy from functioning. They even included supporting fascist elements, as in fact happened in Greece right next door. It was happening at the same time. United States is a global power; what’s happening in one place is usually happening somewhere else. And the fear there too was the spreading of contagion.

Incidentally, the Kremlin agreed on this; they too hated and feared the rise of what was called Eurocommunism, and a little later any form of social democracy. In Europe they feared it just as much as Kissinger did; they had the same perception. Well, this fear of successful independent development is, I think, the primary theme of the Cold War, masked under security pretexts by both sides.

Cuba is a very striking case, the declassified records are extremely illuminating about this, but I am sure you know about it –this is not new, nothing new about it. The Tsar and Metternich warned of the contagion of republican principles from the liberated American colonies which they said might undermined the marvelous order of Europe and Kissinger was probably just quoting the tsar and

Metternich when he warned of the contagion of Allende in Chile and of social democracy in Italy. Let us not forget that he is an expert on that period of history.

The same year, 1973, was designated “the year of Europe” –that was the year of celebration of Europe’s definitive recovery from the war, and Kissinger gave an important address called “The Year of Europe Address” in which he warned Europe to keep to its regional interests, within the overall framework of order that would be managed by the United States– “don’t go on an independent course”. And of course France and Germany are the industrial and commercial and financial heartland of Europe so if they go on an independent course it’s very frightening. The moves to expand NATO and the European Union and the deep concern right now about an independent European military force all fall within this framework of very long standing concerns.

There’s another concern: Northeast Asia. Northeast Asia is the most dynamic economic area in the world, the fastest growing. Its joint gross domestic product is much higher than that of the United States, it has about half of the foreign exchange in the world, it’s greatly involved in world trade and growing beyond the US and Europe and it is a region that is potentially integrated and self sufficient. It has plenty of energy resources in Eastern Siberia; there is now big conflict over pipeline construction –you now, who’s going to get the advantages from them. It has some of the leading industrial powers in the world, Japan and South Korea, China coming along. The US is quite concerned that it too might achieve some form of independence including energy independence, which means freeing itself from the veto power that comes from the control of the sources of energy and the transit routes. That lies at the background of US military interests in the Middle East and central Asia. The big question is about which way the pipelines will go from central Asia and also concerns about North Korea and many other issues. Again there’s too much to talk about at this time as I would like to.

The new faces of the arms race

Let us again take up the initial idea: the bellicose strategy of National Security is dangerous, even, and especially, for the United States. Current technological resources make it possible to attack anywhere,

without prior notice, and with such detailed monitoring that it makes it possible to see cars crossing the streets in some city located in the antipodes. This reduces the need for military bases abroad and for allies and –in principle and perhaps in practice– offers an incredible way of controlling the world through violence. It also, in all likelihood, offers a method to destroy the world because it is known that these systems are extremely dangerous. And of course, in the face of this, other international actors don't remain indifferent, and react.

Russia, for example, has already responded with a marked increase in its military capability. Military expenditure has been increasing by around a third in the last year, reacting to the United States' plans exactly as it was expected to. Nowadays it is concentrating on the manufacture of missiles of greater sophistication and variety, including more advanced submarines that are equipped with improved intercontinental missiles. After the United States dismantled the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, Russia apparently repositioned itself by setting up its missiles in what is called "Launch and Warning" mode, or, what amounts to the same thing, automatic response, and this is virtually a recipe for destroying the world. Its deteriorated command and control system potentially guarantees an accident, and the likelihood of this happening will increase as these military systems are expanded. All of this is well known, and it can all be read about in the technical magazines. Only two weeks ago, the Russian defense minister, Sergei Ivanov, informed NATO that Russia is adopting the Bush doctrine of first attack, which includes nuclear attack against a perceived threat. Well, that is Bush's National Security strategy. Now the world is a more insecure place, Russia having decided to follow the United States' initiative in the strategic field. One cannot expect to reserve this right exclusively for oneself; the Russians are following the example and presumably others will react in a similar way. This is the well-known logic of escalation.

The same is true in relation to the so-called Missile Defense. This has been perfectly well understood by military specialists in China and the United States. In fact, both employ the same terms and know equally well that Missile Defense is an offensive weapon. What these analysts say is that defense with missiles is not only a shield but also a source that supplies the necessary means for a first nuclear strike in the hope of surviving a retaliation, with the expectable consequences. China is responding exactly as expected through an increase in its offensive nuclear military capacity, which forces India

to respond in the same manner, which in turn forces Pakistan to respond, and afterwards all this has its effects on the Middle East and in a large part of the rest of the world.

Again, all this is known, only that these threats, including threats of mass destruction, aren't paid sufficient and due attention. More evidence on the ranking of the threats was generated in September and October 2002. On September 19, two days after the announcement of the new National Security strategy, the Bush administration destroyed international efforts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) which envisioned the supply of monitoring and control mechanisms that would prevent their development. Soon after, on October 23, the United States blocked the efforts made at the United Nations to prevent the militarization of outer space—which the UN correctly described as a serious danger to international peace and security—and also blocked efforts aimed at reaffirming a protocol of 1925 forbidding bacteriological warfare, a very serious threat for the United States, probably impossible to forestall. A good example are the anthrax attacks: even although the tracking of this element led to a federal laboratory, where these actions came from still hasn't been discovered, which illustrates the difficulties that exist to prevent such attempts. The efforts to forbid it were blocked by the Bush administration last October. Since 1999, the United States has blocked efforts to reaffirm and strengthen the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 that forbids the militarization of space. This too has been blocked since the year 2000, and Washington also blocked negotiations at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament and Militarization of Outer Space.

Recently, the Bush administration announced that it is no longer limited by Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This article is the only one that establishes obligations on the nuclear powers, since it imposes a commitment to make efforts in good faith to eliminate nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, all powers have violated it. In fact, the Bush administration is, openly and brazenly, developing new nuclear weapons that will naturally lead others to respond in the same manner.

All these initiatives increase the risks to survival. The same is true with regard to the protection of the environment: the refusal to accept the Kyoto Protocols and other, similar measures is well known, and there is absolutely nothing new in this. Anyone who knows something of history, including the most recent events, knows that the his-

torical record is replete with examples of leaders willing to run the risks of destruction in order to promote their interests with regard to power, dominance and enrichment. The difference now is above all a difference of scale. Now the stakes are much higher. In fact the stakes are really the survival of mankind.

The overall conclusion, I think –and part of this is the reason why there is a sector of the elite that is opposed to the particular forms of dominance promoted by the Bush administration– is that violence is indeed a powerful instrument of control. History demonstrates it, but the dilemmas of violence are not insignificant and we should understand them in all their complexity.

THE ROLE OF IDEAS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALTERNATIVES

PERRY ANDERSON*

MY SUBJECT tonight is centrally the role of ideas in the construction of alternatives. Well, if Marx was right, saying that the dominant ideas in the world are always the ideas of the dominant classes, it is very clear that these classes –in themselves– haven’t changed at all over the last hundred years. In other words, the owners of the world continue to be the owners of the materials means of production, at a national and international level.

Nevertheless, it is equally obvious that the forms of their ideological dominance have indeed changed, and significantly so. I wish to begin my paper, then, with some observations regarding this point.

If we hark back to the world situation after the defeat of fascism in 1945, the international setting was polarized between capitalism and communism. The distinction may be made, however, that while in the East the Soviets employed the terms in the above-mentioned pair, in the Western counterpart, instead, the official concepts in the face-off were completely different. In the West, the Cold War was present-

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ed as a battle between democracy and totalitarianism. The Western bloc did not employ the term “capitalism” for self-reference, since this was considered basically as a term of the enemy’s, a weapon against the system rather than a description of it. The West expressed itself in the name of the “Free World,” not of the “Capitalist World.”

In this sense, the end of the Cold War led capitalism, for the first time in history, to begin to proclaim itself as what it was, an ideology that announced the arrival of an endpoint in social development, constructed on the assumptions of the free market, beyond which it was impossible to conceive substantial improvements. Francis Fukuyama gave the broadest and most ambitious theoretical expression to this view of the world in his book *The End of History*. But in other, more vague and popular expressions, the same message was also spread: capitalism is the universal and permanent fate of humanity. There is no longer anything outside this fulfilled destiny.

This is the nucleus of neoliberalism as an economic doctrine that is still massively dominant at government level all over the world. This swaggering boastfulness of a deregulated capitalism, as the best of all possible worlds, is a novelty of the current hegemonic system. Not even in Victorian times were the virtues and needs of the reign of capital so clamorously proclaimed. The roots of this historical change are clear: it is a product of the West’s clear victory in the Cold War. Let it be fully understood: not only the defeat but rather the complete disappearance of its Soviet adversary, and the consequent inebriation of the owning classes, who now no longer needed euphemisms or circumlocutions to disguise the nature of their domination.

That contradiction between capitalism and communism in the Cold War period had always been overdetermined by another global contradiction; I refer to the struggle between the Third World’s national liberation movements and the First World’s colonial and imperialist powers. On occasion both struggles fused or crisscrossed each other, as here in Cuba, or in China and Vietnam.

The result of a long history of anti-imperialist combat was the emergence around the world of national states that were formally emancipated from the colonial yoke and endowed with juridical independence, even enjoying a seat at the United Nations. The principle of national sovereignty many times violated in practice by the great powers, but never questioned, or, in other words, always affirmed by international law and solemnly inscribed in the United Nations Charter, has been the major conquest of this wave of Third World struggles.

But in their struggles against imperialism, the national liberation movements found themselves benefiting –objectively– from the existence and strength of the Soviet camp. Even when they lacked material or direct support from the Soviet Union, the mere existence of the communist camp kept the West, and especially the United States, from crushing those struggles with all the means at their disposal and without fear of resistance or reprisal. The correlation of global forces, after the Second World War, did not allow the extermination campaigns freely practiced (by France in Morocco, or Britain in Iraq) after the First World War. In fact the United States always tried to present itself before the countries of the Third World as an anti-colonialist country, being the product of the first anti-colonialist revolution on the American continent. The diplomatic and political competition between West and East in the Third World favored the national liberation movements.

With the disappearance of the communist camp there also vanished the traditional inhibitions that conditioned the North in its relations with the South, and this is the second great change in recent decades. Its expression in the field of the confrontation of ideas has been an increasing assault against the principle of national sovereignty. Here the decisive moment was constituted by the Balkan war (1999). The military aggression against Yugoslavia launched by NATO was openly justified as a historical transcending of the fetish of national sovereignty, in the name of higher values, that is to say, in favor of human rights. Since then, an army of jurists, philosophers and ideologues has built up a new doctrine of “military humanism,” seeking to demonstrate that national sovereignty is a dangerous anachronism in this period of globalization, and that it can and should be trampled on to universalize human rights, as these are understood by the more advanced and, of course, enlightened countries. Today, in Iraq, we see the fruit of this “apotheosis” of human rights.

Ideological innovations: “military humanism”

Thus, it can be said that in the field of ideas the new worldwide hegemony is based on two fundamental transformations with regard to the dominant discourse during the Cold War: (a) the self-affirmation of capitalism, declared as such, and not simply as a mere socio-economic system preferable to socialism but as the “sole” form of organizing

modern life conceivable for humanity from here to eternity; (b) the open annulment of national sovereignty as a key to international relations among states, in the name of human rights.

Let us briefly give an account of a structural connection between these two changes. The unlimited reign of capital presupposes the *de facto* cancellation of many of the classical prerogatives of a national state which, in consequences, loses faculties which used to pertain to it, such as controlling the exchange rate, the interest rate, its fiscal policy and lastly the very structure of its national budget. In this sense, the juridical annulment of national sovereignty –to the benefit of military humanism– completes and formalizes an already quite advanced process of erosion of the structure of the nation-state.

Now then, are these two ideological transformations enough for setting up a new worldwide hegemony? No, because a hegemony demands something more, demands the existence of a particular power that will organize and enforce compliance with the general rules of the system. In a word, there is no worldwide hegemony without a hegemonic state. A hegemonic power has to be a particular state –with a series of features that, by definition, cannot be shared by other states, since it is these peculiarities, precisely, that make it a superpower above the other states. A particular state capable, therefore, of performing a universal role as guarantor of the “proper operation” of the system.

We thus still need to mention the third and most unexpected of the changes underway. While neoliberalism offers a universal social and economic framework, “military humanism” proposes a universal political framework. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the radius of action of United States hegemony has extended enormously, for the first time turning truly global.

One may then ask oneself, how is this new U.S. high-handedness articulated with the ideological innovations of neoliberalism and of military humanism? Unfortunately, in a manner totally unthinkable only a few years ago. With a steady tread, imperialism has been fully and candidly rehabilitated as a highly valuable, modernizing and civilizing political system. It was Anthony (Tony) Blair’s advisor on national security affairs, Robert Cooper, who initiated this contemporary transvaluation of imperialism, giving as a touching example NATO’s assault on Yugoslavia. Afterwards, Lyndon Johnson’s grandson, the constitutional jurist and nuclear strategist Philip Bobbit, predicted in his –certainly enormous– book *The Shield of Achilles* the most

radical and ambitious theorization of the new United States hegemony. Today, articles, essays and books that celebrate the rebirth of the “American Empire,” typically embellished with lengthy comparisons with the Roman Empire and its civilizing role, cascade from the printing presses in the United States.

It must be stressed that this neo-imperialist euphoria isn’t an ephemeral excess of the United States right; there are both Democrats and Republicans in its array of heroes. For every Robert Kagan or Max Boot, there is a counterpart like Philip Bobbit or Michael Ignatieff. It would be a serious mistake to believe that this is the work of one man alone. That Ronald Reagan or the Bushes –father and son– have been capable by themselves to give life and growth to these ideas. It is not so. James Carter and Bill Clinton, too, with their Zbigniew Brzezinskis and Samuel Bergers, have made their contributions, playing equally fundamental roles in the development of this political scene.

We could state it in the following manner: both neoliberalism and neo-imperialism have been politically bipartisan in the United States, as also in its closest ally, the United Kingdom. It is not that the role of the center-right and the performance of the center-left have been identical in their emergence and consolidation. Nevertheless, in both cases there was a brief but significant intervention in the path taken by this phenomenon. Thus, neoconservative monetarism began in the North under the governments of James Carter and Callaghan in the late 1970s; was enormously powered and expanded under Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher; and finally consolidated by Bill Clinton and Tony Blair. Analogously, the first boldly neo-imperialist initiatives were shaped in Afghanistan by Brzezinski; extended to Nicaragua, Grenada, Libya and other places by Casey and Weinberger; and normalized as part of the system in the Middle East and in the Balkans by Albright and Berger.

Now, if these are nowadays the main features of the new worldwide hegemony in the battlefield of ideas, where are the main clusters of resistance localized, and what specific forms do they take? If we look at the global political scene, we may identify three different geographical areas where adverse reactions to U.S. hegemony appear.

Foci of global resistance

At the beginning of 2003 Europe saw the biggest street demonstrations in its entire history against the war that was being readied in the

Middle East. In Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Britain, millions of people came out into the streets to express their opposition to the invasion of Iraq –even many United States citizens chose to demonstrate against this war. The center of gravity of the international pacifist movement has undeniably been European. How much hope may be placed on the reach of this major reaction by European public opinion? Could it have been a merely immediate and ephemeral impulse? What was undoubtedly influential was the undisguisable hostility vis-à-vis the policy of the White House, which continues to be reflected in all surveys following the war, as well as in a torrent of articles, manifestos and outpourings in the mass media of the main countries on the continent. A concrete aspect of this recent wave of anti-U.S. sentiment is the affirmation of a historical identity, pertaining to European societies and absolutely different from that of the United States. The philosopher J. Habermas and many other European intellectuals and politicians theorize these differences as a contrast in values. Europe continues to be more humane, more tolerant, more pacific and socially more responsible with regard to the people governed than its United States counterpart.

It is clear that the European capitalist model has, since the Second World War, been more regulatory and interventionist than that of the U.S., and that no European state, and the European Union even less so, enjoys a remotely comparable military power to that at Washington's disposal. But nowadays neoliberalism reigns in all European societies with the same watchwords as in the rest of the world in terms of reduction of government expenditure, reduction of social benefits, deregulation of markets, privatization of industries and public services. In this regard the structural differences between the European Union and the United States are ever smaller. What appears is a vague notion that alludes to the existence of a cultural difference between those political units, although, obviously, with every passing year European societies find themselves more subordinated to the products of Hollywood and of Silicon Valley. Nevertheless, this European distance or cultural reaction which we referred to constitutes a very weak basis in terms of a lasting political resistance to the United States. This is very clearly seen in the fact that the overwhelming majority of the demonstrators against the Iraq war should have fervently supported the war against Yugoslavia, whose justification and *modus operandi* were more or less identical. The main difference appears to center on the fact that at that time the president was Bill

Clinton, a sumptuous and effusive Democrat with whom so many Europeans identified themselves, and not the Republican George Bush, who reminds them of an unacceptably sullen and rustic cowboy. In other words, there is no opposition to neo-imperialism in principle; there only exists a “label aversion” against the figure of its current ruler. For this reason, it is no coincidence that after the conquest of Iraq the European pacifist movement finds itself in a situation of reflux, accepting the *fait accompli*, and without making any type of significant manifestation of solidarity with the national resistance to the occupation. To this is added the fact that the European governments that have initially opposed the invasion of Iraq (like Germany, France and Belgium) have quickly adapted to the conquest, seeking timidly to repair their relations with the White House.

Let us now position ourselves in the Middle East. Here, the setting is a totally different one, since combat is being offered, arms in hand, against the new worldwide hegemony. Both in Afghanistan and in Iraq, the lightning United States conquest was followed by a tenacious guerrilla resistance in the territorial space that still causes the U.S. serious difficulties. Additionally, there isn’t the slightest doubt about the massive support of Arab public opinion in the entire region to these national liberation struggles against the occupiers and their puppets. It would be surprising if the Arab world did not react in this manner in the face of the U.S. aggressions, since these take place in a formerly colonial area that each day, with Washington’s blessing, experiences the expansion of Israeli colonialism in the Palestinian territories. From the outset, this historical background separates the form in which the Arab opposition is carried out from that of the European opposition with regard to the new worldwide hegemony, and to this end it must be taken into account that some of the above-mentioned European powers were themselves the original colonizers of the region. But there are two further factors that differentiate the Arab from the European resistance. Here, too, a cultural contrast with the superpower comes into play – a much deeper contrast than the one examined above – because it is sustained by a millennial religion: Islam. Contemporary Islam is, with all its nuances, infinitely less permeable to the penetration of United States culture and ideology than the vague welfare-state identity which the Europeans boast. As we have repeatedly seen, the former is capable of inspiring acts of counterattack of unparalleled ferocity.

Additionally, this ancient religious faith melds with a modern nationalist feeling, rebelling against the miseries and humiliations of a region governed for decades by corrupt and brutal feudal or puppet régimes. The combination of the cultural and religious with the national endows the Islamic-Arab resistance with a strength that will not be easily exhausted. But at the same time, it has its limitations. It lacks the social aspect, a credible alternative vision of a modern society to that which the hegemonic power seeks to impose in the Middle East. Meanwhile, the diverse tyrannical and backward régimes of the region continue to oppress their peoples, all of them, without exception, being ready to collaborate with the United States, as has been demonstrated *ad libitum* by the Arab League and by the experience of the First Gulf War.

We have already mentioned two of the existing centers of resistance: Europe and the Middle East. Let us turn now to developing the third focus of resistance, located in Latin America.

Singularities of the Latin American resistance

In Latin America we find a much stronger and promising combination of factors than in Europe or in the Middle East. Here and only here, the resistance to neoliberalism and to neo-imperialism melds the cultural with the social and national. That is to say, it implies the emerging vision of another type of organization of society, and another model of relations among states on the basis of these three different dimensions. Of the three decisive features that distinguish this region from the previous ones, this is the first one to underline.

In the second place, Latin America is –and this is fact that is frequently forgotten– the only region of the world with a continuous history of revolutionary upsets and radical political struggles that extend for somewhat more than the last century. Neither in Asia, nor in Africa, nor in Europe do we find the equivalent of the succession of revolts and revolutions that have marked the specific Latin American experience. The twentieth century began with the Mexican Revolution that took place before the First World War. It was a victorious revolution, but also one that was “purified” as regards many of its popular aspirations. Between the two wars there was a series of heroic uprisings and political experiments that were defeated but deserve to be remembered: Sandinism in Nicaragua, the Aprist revolt in Peru, the

insurrection in El Salvador, the revolution of 1933 in Cuba, the rising in Brazil, the brief socialist republic and the popular front in Chile. With the Second World War, however, a new cycle began: first Peronism in its Jacobin phase in Argentina, the Bogotazo in Colombia and the Bolivian revolution of 1952. At the end of the decade the Cuban Revolution burst out. There followed a new wave of guerrilla struggles all across the continent, and lastly we cannot fail to mention the election of the government of Salvador Allende in Chile.

All these experiments were crushed with the cycle of military dictatorships that began in Brazil in 1964 and then cleared the way for Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina in the leaden 1970s. By the middle of the decade, the reaction appeared to be victorious almost everywhere. Again, however, the fire of the resistance was lit with the triumph of the Sandinist revolution, the struggle of the Salvadoran guerrillas, and the massive campaign for direct elections in Brazil. This onslaught of popular insurgency, too, was mercilessly disarticulated. In the mid-1990s there reigned in almost all Latin American countries native versions of U.S. neoliberalism, installed or backed by Washington: the governments of Carlos S. Menem in Argentina, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Fernando Henrique Cardoso in Brazil, Salinas de Gortari in Mexico, Sánchez de Losada in Bolivia, etc. Finally, with a restored, stable democracy, and excellent economic policies, the Department of State believed that Latin America had become a safe and quiet backyard of the global empire. However, soon the political landscape was to become radicalized once more. The most recent popular cycle, which began with the Zapatist revolt in Chiapas, has already witnessed the arrival of Chávez in power in Venezuela, the victories of Ignacio Lula da Silva and Néstor Kirchner in Brazil and Argentina respectively, the collapse of Sánchez de Losada in Bolivia, and repeated social outbreaks in Peru and Ecuador.

We still have to mention a third distinctive feature of the Latin American scene: here, and only here, do we find coalitions of governments and movements in a broad front of resistance to the new worldwide hegemony. In Europe, the pacifist and alterglobalist movement has been much more extensive than the diplomatic opposition by some governments to the war in Iraq. This asymmetry between the street and the palace has been one of the most significant features of the European situation, where the majority of governments –Great Britain, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark and all of Washington's new satellites in Eastern Europe– not only backed the

aggression against Iraq, but participated in the occupation, while the majority of their populations opposed the war. In the Middle East, this asymmetry between the virtually unanimous opposition of the street to the conquest of Iraq and the virtually unanimous complicity of the régimes with the aggressor is even more dramatic, or indeed total. In Latin America, in contrast, one sees a series of governments that to diverse degrees and in different fields try to resist the will of the hegemonic power, and a set of typically more radical social movements that fight for a different world, without diplomatic or ideological inhibitions; there one finds from the Zapatists in Mexico and the members of the Landless Movement (MST) in Brazil, to the coca growers and miners of Bolivia, the picketers in Argentina, the strikers in Peru, the indigenist block in Ecuador, and so many others. This constellation endows the resistance front with a repertory of tactics and actions, and with a strategic potential, superior to those of any other part of the world. In Asia, for example, there may be governments that are firmer in their opposition to United States economic and ideological commands –Mahathir’s Malaysia is an obvious case– but powerful social movements are lacking; and where such movements exist, the governments typically show themselves to be to a greater or lesser extent servile, as in South Korea, whose president now promises troops to help the occupation of Iraq.

Limits of the government-social movements articulation

Taking into account all that has been said up to this point, it is logical that the two most important initiatives for international resistance to the new worldwide hegemony should have been conceived and launched in Latin America. The first, of course, has been the emergence of the World Social Forum, with its symbolic roots in Porto Alegre; and the second, the creation of the G-22, in Cancún. In both cases, the notable aspect is a true intercontinental resistance front, which in very different ways encompassed movements in one case and governments in the other. Now then, both the Social Forums and the G-22 have concentrated their resistance efforts on the neoliberal sector of the enemy front, i.e. essentially on the economic agenda of the hegemonic power and its allies in the wealthy countries. Here, correctly, the central targets have been the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). In this battle of ideas

the notion of free markets, in other words, pure and autonomous systems of exchange of commodities, of labor and of capital, without political or other interference, have been ever more clearly exposed as mystification. All markets, at all times, are erected and regulated politically: the only pertinent question is what type of politics shapes and determines them. Neoliberalism seeks to impose its "Great Neoliberalism Transformation" (to employ the formula coined by Karl Polanyi). Like its predecessor, the Victorian state, this project on a global scale implies the imposition of trading rules that favor the interests of the metropolitan states and corporations to the detriment of the interests of the peripheral countries. Protectionism turns into a privilege reserved to the North, while in the South it is seen as an infraction of the fundamental laws of any healthy economy. Compared to this hypocrisy, the medieval idea of a fair price might seem like a model of enlightenment. The attack that was carried out in Cancún against the ideological arrogance and practical abuses of the hegemonic power and its allies hit the mark.

Nevertheless, and here the discrepancies between governments and movements stand out, resisting hegemonic pretensions in the trade area –for example, defending MERCOSUR against the FTAA– cannot lead to very encouraging results, if at the same time the IMF and the financial markets are docilely obeyed in matters as crucial as interest rates, the fiscal standards, the pension system, the so-called primary surplus, not to mention responses to the popular demand for an egalitarian redistribution of land. Here the role of social movements becomes decisive. Only their ability to mobilize the masses the peasants, workers, informal and precarious workers and employees who combat wavering and opportunistic governments –if necessary, without truce– can ensure more egalitarian and fair social policies. The democracy which the neoliberal governments of the last decade boasted of has always been a restricted and elitist affair, with low electoral participation and major interference by the power of money. A democracy that practices an effective resistance against the new worldwide hegemony is something different: it requires an exercise of power from below, the embryonic forms of which are being outlined in the "participative budget" of Porto Alegre, the Bolivian insurgency committees, the self-organization of the Venezuelan shanty towns, the MST's land takeovers.

Who fights against neo-imperialism, and how?

We take due note of the existence of promising outbreaks of regional international resistance against neoliberalism. What is necessary now is to ask oneself about the current situation as regards the challenging of neo-imperialism. Here the setting becomes somber. The first Social Forums have carefully avoided the apparently too burning issue of the new United States bellicosity. In Europe there have been not a few people who, swallowing the idea of a military humanism in defense of human rights, backed the bombing of Belgrade. Among governments, naturally, one sees even less appetite for facing the hegemonic power in its strongest terrain, the military field. The reaction of the diverse Latin American governments to the invasion of Iraq could be encapsulated by the immediate repudiation to which the unfortunate Chilean ambassador to the United Nations was subjected by the social-democratic President Lagos, when in an unguarded moment during an informal chat he condemned the Anglo-U.S. aggression, and for this reason received a furious telegram from La Moneda in which he was ordered to rectify his *lapsus*. Chile didn't condemn the aggression; it regretted it. The other Latin American governments haven't demonstrated any greater courage: the only two exceptions were Cuba and Venezuela.

Now then, this resistance front against the new worldwide hegemony demands a consistent criticism of its key concepts. Here the battle of ideas for the construction of an alternative must concentrate its aim on two decisive points: human rights and the United Nations, which have currently turned into instruments of the global strategy of the hegemonic power. Let us first examine human rights. Historically, the declaration that introduced them to the world, in 1789, has been one of the great political feats of the French Revolution. But, as was to be expected, this notion, the fruit of the ideology of a great bourgeois revolution, lacked a philosophical basis to underpin it. A right is not an anthropological phenomenon; it is a juridical concept, which has no meaning outside a legal framework that institutes this or that right in a code of law. There cannot be any human rights in the abstract, which is to say, transcending any concrete state, in the absence of a code of law. To speak of human rights as if they could pre-exist beyond the laws that would bring them to life is mystification.

It was because of this that a classic utilitarian thinker, Jeremy Bentham, called them “follies” and Marx, whose opinion of the former was never high, did not hesitate to quote him on this regard.

The obvious fact is that there cannot be any human rights as if they were dictated by a universal anthropology, not only because their idea is a relatively recent phenomenon, but also because there is no universal consensus on the list of such rights. According to the dominant ideology, private property, naturally including that which concerns the means of production, is considered a fundamental human right, proclaimed as such, for example, in the war against Yugoslavia, when the U.S. ultimatum to Rambouillet that set off the NATO attack demanded not only freedom and security for the population of Kosovo, and the free movement of NATO troops through Yugoslav territory, but also blithely stipulated –I quote– that Kosovo must have a market economy. In fact, within the parameters of the dominant ideology in the United States, the right to decide is daily opposed to the right to life with regard to the issue of abortion. There is no rational criterion for discriminating among such constructions, since rights are by their constitution malleable and arbitrary, like any political notion: anybody can invent one according to his own whim. What they normally represent is interests, and it is the relative power of these interests that determines which of the rival constructions is predominant. The right to employment, for example, has no status in the constitutional doctrines of the countries of the North; the right to inheritance does. To grasp this does not imply any nihilistic position. Although human rights (but not legal rights) are a philosophical confusion, there exist human needs that indeed do without any juridical framework, and correspond in part to universal anthropological phenomena –such as the need for nourishment, for shelter, for protection against torture or abuse– and partly correspond to demands that are, in a Hegelian manner, the product of historical development, such as the freedoms of expression, entertainment, organization, and others. In this sense, rather than of rights, it is always preferable to speak of needs: a more materialist and less equivocal notion.

Let us now turn to our military humanism, the illustrated shield of human rights under the new worldwide hegemony. I have noticed that the Social Forum and more generally the alterglobalization movements have paid little attention to neo-imperialism, preferring to concentrate their fire on neoliberalism. Nevertheless, there is a very simple international mobilizing watchword that they might

adopt. This consists in demanding the closure of all foreign military bases around the world. Currently, the United States maintains such bases in over a hundred countries throughout the planet. We must demand that each of these bases be closed and evacuated, from the oldest and most infamous of all, here in Guantánamo, to the newest, in Kabul, Bishkek and Baghdad. The same for the British, French, Russian and other bases. What justification is there for these innumerable tumors on the flanks of national sovereignty, other than simply *la raison d'être* of the empire and its allies?

The United States military bases constitute the fundamental strategic infrastructure of the hegemonic power. The United Nations provide an essential superstructure for its new forms of domination. From the first Gulf War onwards, the UN has operated as a docile instrument of its successive aggressions, maintaining, for a decade, the criminal blockade of Iraq, which has caused between 300,000 and 500,000 deaths, most of them of children; consecrating the NATO attack on Yugoslavia, where it propitiated and continues to propitiate post-sale services to the aggressors in Kosovo; and now, cooperating with the occupiers of Iraq to set up a government of U.S. puppets in Baghdad, and collecting funds from other countries to finance the costs of the conquest of the country. Since the disappearance of the Soviet Union, Washington's command over the UN has become almost limitless. The White House directly, and without any shame, chose the current Secretary-General as its administrative butler in Manhattan, casting his predecessor aside as insufficiently servile to the United States. The FBI openly eavesdrops on all foreign delegations to the General Assembly. The CIA, without even denying its activities, which are public knowledge, penetrated the corps of the so-called inspectors in Iraq, from head to toe. There is no measure of bribery or blackmail that the Department of State does not employ daily to twist nations' representatives to its will. There are occasions, though they are ever rarer, when the UN doesn't explicitly approve the projects and decisions of the United States on which Washington unilaterally takes the initiative, and then the UN authorizes them post-facto, as a *fait accompli*. What never happens now is that the UN rejects or condemns a United States action.

The root of this situation is very simple. The UN was built up in the days of F.D. Roosevelt and Truman as a machine for the dominance of the big powers over the other countries of the world, with a façade of equality and democracy in the General Assembly, and an

iron-fisted concentration of power in the hands of the five permanent members of the Security Council, arbitrarily chosen among the victors of a war that has no relevance today. This deeply oligarchic structure lends itself to any kind of diplomatic command and manipulation. This is what has led the organization –which in principle ought to be a bulwark of the national sovereignty of the poor countries of the world– to its current prostitution, converted into a mere mask for the demolition of that sovereignty in the name of human rights, naturally transformed in turn into the right of the hegemonic power to blockade, bomb, invade and occupy lesser countries, according to its whim.

What conceivable remedy is there to this situation? All projects for the reform of the Security Council have sunk on the grounds of the rejection by the monopolists of the veto to give up their privileges, which they also have the power to protect. All demands by the General Assembly for a democratization of the organization have been, and will be, in vain. The only plausible solution to this impasse would appear to be the withdrawal from the organization of one or several large countries of the Third World, which could de-legitimize it until the Security Council were forced to accept its expansion and a redistribution of real powers within the General Assembly. In the same way, additionally, the only hope for serious nuclear disarmament is the withdrawal of one or several countries of the Third World from the infamous Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty –which ought to be called Treaty for the Preservation of the Nuclear Oligopoly– to force the true, arrogant holders of weapons of mass destruction to renounce their privileges.

It is necessary to restore and promote any serious resistance to the new worldwide hegemony, Samir Amin has said here¹. I agree. I will only add that the principles of equality that are demanded and applied should be inclusive, that is to say, that they not be restricted to the economic and social fields within nations, but also be applied to political and military aspects among nations.

As I see it, we are still far from having achieved this order of things. How far, can be seen in the latest resolution of the Security Council, voted in this very month of October, and in which the supreme organ of the United Nations solemnly welcomes the puppet council of the occupation forces in Iraq, calling it the incarnation of Iraqi sovereignty, condemning the acts of resistance to the occupation, calling on all countries to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq under the

¹ See Samir Amin's article in this book.

designs of these same puppet forces, and naming the United States as recognized leader of a multinational force of occupation of the country. This resolution, which is nothing else than the UN's act of blessing for the conquest of Iraq, was unanimously approved. It was signed by France, Russia, China, Germany, Spain, Bulgaria, Mexico, Chile, Guinea, Cameroon, Angola, Syria, Pakistan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The supposedly Gaullist France, the supposedly popular China, the supposedly social democratic Germany and Chile, the supposedly Baathist Syria, the Angola once rescued by Cuba from its own invasion, not to speak of the other, more familiar clients of the United States, all of them accomplices in the recolonization of Iraq. This is the new worldwide hegemony. Let us combat it.

DEMOCRATIC POLITIES IN ADVANCED COUNTRIES: SUCCESS AND CHALLENGE

ROBERT A. DAHL*

I HAVE BEEN INVITED to address you “on the current situation and prospects for democratic polities in advanced nations”¹.

Because an adequate examination of that topic would far exceed our time, I am going to focus on just one major challenge for democratic polities in advanced countries. This is the fundamental problem of attaining and sustaining a satisfactory level of political equality among the citizens of a democratic country. Though the problem of political equality is also too vast in its ramifications and complexities to deal with adequately here, I would like to explore three questions. Is political equality a desirable goal? If so, why does the goal of political equality pose a profound challenge for democracy in the advanced countries? Are there feasible innovations in the standard political institutions of large scale democracy that might help to meet the challenge?

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¹ I have drawn freely here on my previous work.

Democracies: older, newer, newest

Before I turn to these questions, let me begin with this observation. One of the most extraordinary changes in all recorded history is the amazingly rapid increase in the number of democratic systems throughout the world during the twentieth century (Table 1). In 1900, democratic political systems existed in only six countries –and in all but one, New Zealand, the suffrage was restricted to male citizens. What is more, in the southern United States, most African-Americans were, in practice, excluded from voting, and would remain so until the mid-1960s. By 1930, the number of democratic countries had increased to twenty one, although in three –Belgium, France, and Switzerland–women were still excluded. By mid-century the democratic countries numbered twenty five– several of which would collapse into dictatorship. By the end of the century, out of 191 countries in the world, more than seventy were democracies and they included almost half the world's population².

I find it helpful to classify democratic countries into three groups: the older democracies, the newer democracies, and the newest democracies. Democratic political institutions have existed continuously since 1950 or earlier in twenty-one countries. I'll call these the older democracies (Table 2). In another fourteen countries democratized after 1950, the institutions have existed continuously since 1980 (Lijphart, 1999, Table 4.1: 50). These I'll call the newer democracies. Finally, in thirty-seven countries, the newest democracies, the institutions have existed only since 1981 or later. Indeed, in many, democratic institutions are very recent (Diamond, 2003).

2 Larry Diamond (2003: 8-9) has recently listed 72 countries as "liberal democracies", i.e., countries that fully possess the basic institutions. He identifies an additional thirty-one countries as "electoral democracies." In these, "the principal positions of political power are filled through regular, free, fair, and competitive (and therefore multiparty) elections. Electoral democracy can exist in countries with significant violations of human rights, massive corruption, and a weak rule of law... Normatively I do not argue that we should rest content with such an illiberal and hollowed-out democracy as our goal. The goal for every country should be a political system that combines democracy on the one hand with freedom, the rule of law, and good government on the other. As Guillermo O'Donnell has incisively argued, a truly accountable political system requires three components. One is *democratic*, enabling citizens to choose their rulers in free and fair elections and to participate and express themselves in other political processes. The second is *liberal*, limiting the power of the state to encroach on the basic rights of the person, and thus affirming civil liberties and minority rights. The third is *republican*, providing a rule of law and good government through institutions of horizontal accountability that check and balance executive (and other forms of) power, while holding all actors, public and private, equal before the law. When these three normative goals are combined, we have the second, higher threshold of democracy, what I call *liberal democracy*."

The *older* democratic countries share much in common. For one thing, their predominantly market economies produce very high levels of income. These range from a GDP of over \$19,000 per capita in New Zealand to around \$30,000 or more in Norway, Iceland, Ireland, and the United States (Table 3). The older democratic countries also rank high on the quality of life, as measured by the "Human Development Index." This index, which is prepared annually by the United Nations Development Program, includes GDP per capita, life expectancy at birth, adult literacy, school enrollment, general life expectancy, and education (UNDP, 2003).

The fourteen newer *democracies* are far more mixed. Thus Spain's GDP per capita of \$20,000 is slightly larger than that of New Zealand, an older democracy. On the Human Development Index, Spain ranks slightly higher than two other older democracies, Italy and New Zealand, while Portugal and Greece are close behind. At the bottom are Jamaica, with a GDP per capita of \$3,720, India with \$2,840, and Papua New Guinea with \$2,570.

The *newest democratic countries* are perhaps even more diverse. In most of them, democratic institutions have never previously existed. Yet Chile and Uruguay are exceptions, because both countries experienced many years of democracy before an interval of dictatorship set in. Some of the newer democracies –Israel, South Korea, Taiwan– have advanced economies and high levels of personal income, whereas in some, most people are desperately poor and lack the basic essentials for a decent life.

As a group, then, the older democracies possess some exceptional advantages. Yet even in these affluent countries where democratic political institutions have been well established, political equality, considered as an ideal, continues to pose a serious challenge, and I believe will continue to do so.

Is political equality desirable?³

Before we turn to that challenge, we might first ask whether movement toward greater political equality is necessarily a good thing. Is political equality really a desirable goal?

3 In the following I draw freely from my "The Future of Political Equality," (2001 [a]).

Although some among us may have reservations, I believe that if we are prepared to make two assumptions, the case for political equality and democracy becomes extraordinarily powerful. Each assumption is, in my view, difficult to reject in reasonable and open public discourse.

The first is the moral judgment that all human beings are of equal intrinsic worth, that no person is intrinsically superior in worth to another, and that the good or interests of each person must be given equal consideration⁴. Let me call this the assumption of intrinsic equality. The alternative –that some human beings are of intrinsically greater worth than others and therefore their interests ought to be given special consideration beyond that of their inferiors– seems to me so morally opprobrious that it cannot be reasonably defended in open public discourse.

Yet even if we accept this moral judgment, the troublesome question immediately arises, who or what group is best qualified to decide what the good or interests of a person really are? Pretty clearly the answer will vary, depending on the situation, the kinds of decisions, and the persons involved. To justify political equality as an end, then, we need to make a second assumption. If we restrict our focus to the government of a state, then it seems to me that the safest and most prudent assumption would run something like this: among adults, no persons are so definitely better qualified than others to govern that they should be entrusted with complete and final authority over the government of the state (Dahl, 1989; 1998: 74 ss).

Although we might reasonably add refinements and qualifications to this prudential judgment, it is difficult for me to see how any substantially different proposition could be supported, particularly if we draw on crucial historical cases in which substantial numbers of persons have been denied full citizenship. Does anyone really believe today that when the working classes, women, and racial and ethnic minorities were excluded from political participation, their interests were adequately considered and protected by those who were privileged to govern over them?

Yet even if political equality is a desirable goal, you might wonder whether, like most desirable goals, it may sometimes conflict with other important values, indeed might actually harm them? And if so,

4 I provide a fuller account in my *Democracy and Its Critics*, (1989) and *On Democracy* (1998). In these works and elsewhere I have drawn on Stanley I. Benn (1967: 61-78).

shouldn't our justifiable desire to attain other goals temper our pursuit of political equality?

Consider, for example, the conflict that is often said to exist between equality and liberty. In the second volume of *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville seems to offer a scenario in which excessive equality in a democratic society will lead to the impairment of freedom of thought, expression, and other fundamental rights. Since his time this view has often been voiced by critics fearful of the possible "excesses" of democracy. Indeed, Tocqueville is sometimes interpreted as foreseeing the possibility, or even the likelihood, that majorities may employ their rights to destroy democracy by supporting authoritarian rulers.

What does a century and a half of experience since Tocqueville's time reveal?

Before turning to my response, I cannot resist commenting that I am frequently amazed by assertions about the supposed conflict between liberty and equality that make no mention of what would seem to me to be an absolutely essential requirement of any reasonable discussion about the relation between the two. Whenever we talk about liberty, freedom or rights, are we not obliged to answer the question: liberty or rights for whom?⁵

As to historical experience: when we examine the course of democratic development over the past two centuries, and particularly over the century just ended, what we see is a pattern of democratic development that seems to me to contradict the pessimistic Tocquevillian scenario.

As democratic institutions become more deeply rooted in a country, so do fundamental political rights, liberties and opportunities. As democratic institutions mature in a country, the likelihood that they will give way to an authoritarian regime approaches zero. As we all know, democracy can collapse into dictatorship. But breakdowns are extraordinarily rare in mature democracies. Instead, breakdowns are likely to occur in countries that encounter times of great crisis and stress when their democratic institutions are relatively new and frag-

5 Amartya Sen (1992: 17-22) seems to me entirely correct when he says: "It is, I believe, arguable that to have any kind of plausibility, ethical reasoning on social matters must involve elementary equal consideration for all at some level that is seen as critical. The absence of such equality would make a theory arbitrarily discriminating and hard to defend... Libertarians," he goes on to say, "must think it important that people should have liberty. Given this, questions would immediately arise regarding: who, how much, how distributed, how equal?"

ile. Occasional crisis appears to be an inevitable occurrence in the life of every country. Even mature democratic countries face severe crises: wars, economic depressions, large- scale unemployment, terrorism, and other challenges. But they have never, or almost never, collapsed into authoritarian regimes.

In the twentieth century, on something like 70 occasions, democracies have given way to nondemocratic regimes. Yet with very few exceptions, these breakdowns have occurred in countries where democratic institutions were very new –less than a generation old. Indeed, the only instances in which a democratic breakdown occurred in a country where democratic institutions had existed for 20 years seem to be Uruguay and Chile in 1973, though even here the case of Chile is a somewhat less clear-cut case because of restrictions on the suffrage that had only recently been lifted. As to the famous case of the Weimar Republic, we need to remember that it had existed less than 14 years before the Nazi takeover and the stresses on the German people –defeat in World War I, followed by inflation that inflicted enormous damage on the middle class, and then by extensive and continuing unemployment– were enormous.

Nor is the pessimistic scenario of declining liberties confirmed by the 21 countries in which democratic institutions have now existed continuously for the past half century or more, the older democracies. Have the fundamental rights and liberties of citizens steadily narrowed or become less secure over the past half century in these countries –in, to name a few, Iceland, Britain, Norway, France, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, the United States? I do not see how an affirmative answer to this question could be seriously maintained. Although we must not ignore the occasional harms and failures, what is striking is the extent to which fundamental rights, including political rights, have been broadened in democratic countries over the past century, not contracted. In changes that broke with ancient and deeply established practices, fundamental political rights have been extended to groups hitherto excluded –notably women and racial minorities– and deepened to include wholly new social and economic rights.

Ideal vs. actual

I now want to advance a proposition that runs directly counter to the view that political equality conflicts with liberty. My proposition is this: insofar as the goal of political equality is expressed through democratic institutions, it actually *requires* fundamental rights and liberties. To see why this is so, I want to introduce a distinction that has been familiar at least since Aristotle's time: between ideal and actual political systems. For the same reasons that Aristotle found it useful to describe his three ideal constitutions in order to classify *actual* systems, a description of an ideal democracy provides a model against which to compare various actual systems. Although ideal democracy is probably unachievable, setting out its ideal requirements is highly useful, I believe, for classifying and appraising actual political systems. A conception of the ideal –the kind of system we would like to emulate– is also useful, I think, for designing appropriate political institutions, for fashioning strategies of democratization, and so on.

In classifying *actual* political systems, we commonly judge some to be “democracies,” even though they fall short, probably far short, of the ideal, as when we say that the United States, France, and Sweden, for example, are democracies. In effect, we conclude that however distant their political institutions are from the ideal, they meet its requirements at an acceptable level, a minimal threshold, if you will.

How then should we describe the ideal? Although no model of democracy can claim universal acceptability, it is useful, I find, to think of an ideal democracy as a political system that might be designed for members of an association who were willing to treat one another, for political purposes at least, as *political equals*. The members of the association –let me call them collectively the *demos*– might, and indeed almost certainly would, view one another as unequal in other important respects. But if they were to assume that, despite these inequalities, all of them ought to possess equal rights to participate fully in making the policies, rules, laws, or other decisions that all citizens are expected (or required) to obey, then the government of their state would, ideally, have to satisfy several criteria. Let me list these criteria without amplification.

- Before a policy is adopted by the association, all the members of the *demos* would have equal and effective opportunities for making known to other members their views about what the policy should be.

- When the moment arrives at which the decision will finally be made, every member would have an equal and effective opportunity to vote, and all votes would be counted as equal.
- Within a reasonable amount of time, each member would have equal and effective opportunities for learning about the relevant alternative policies and their likely consequences.
- The demos would have the exclusive opportunity to decide how, and if its members chose, what matters are to be placed on the agenda. Thus the democratic process required by the three preceding characteristics would never be closed. The policies of the association would always be open to change by the demos, if its members chose to do so.
- All of the members of the demos would have the full rights that are implied by the first four criteria: a right to effective participation, a right to equality in voting, a right to opportunities for gaining an enlightened understanding of the issues, and a right to participate in exercising final control over the agenda.

Actual democracy

As we all know, the democratic ideal I have just described is too demanding to be fully achieved in the actual world of human society. Although I have described that ideal as applying to any association, the particular association to which democracy is most important is, of course, the state. To achieve political equality in a state, so far as may be possible under the imperfect conditions of the real world, then, certain political institutions for governing the state –*actual* if by no means *ideal* institutions– would be required. Amid the imperfections of the real world, these actual institutions would be necessary, but they would no doubt be far from sufficient to achieve the ideal. Moreover, democratic institutions in the modern world, unlike the assembly governments of the Greek city-states and the medieval republics of Italy, would have to be suitable for governing a state that encompasses a large territory, such as a country, and perhaps a very large country, like the United States. That is, they would need to provide for *representative* democracy rather than *direct* (or *assembly* or *town meeting*) democracy.

There is no need for me to describe in detail the basic political institutions of representative government in a modern democratic country, but by now it should be obvious that just as in the ideal so too

in actual practice, the existence of a representative democracy presupposes that all its adult citizens possess a body of fundamental rights, liberties, and opportunities. These include:

- the right to vote in the election of officials in free and fair elections;
- the right to run for elective office;
- the right to free expression;
- the right to form and participate in independent political organizations, including political parties;
- the right to gain access to independent sources of information;
- rights to any other freedoms and opportunities that may be necessary for the effective operation of the political institutions of large-scale democracy.

Finally, to be fully democratic as we now understand the ideal, all or at any rate most adult permanent residents under its jurisdiction and bound by its laws would possess these rights. I need hardly add that although most democrats today would consider the full inclusion specified by this criterion to be a necessary requirement if a state is to be governed democratically, before the twentieth century most advocates of democracy would have rejected it (Dahl, 1989; 1998 and table 4 in this article).

It is obvious, then, that both as an ideal and as an actual set of political institutions, democracy is necessarily a system of rights, liberties, and opportunities. These are required not merely by definition. They are required in order for a democratic system of government to exist in the real world. If we consider these political rights, liberties, and opportunities as in some sense fundamental, then in theory and practice, democracy does not conflict with liberty. On the contrary, democratic institutions are necessary for the existence of some of our most fundamental rights and opportunities. If these political institutions, including the rights, liberties, and opportunities they embody, do not exist in a country, then to that extent the country is not democratic. When they disappear, as they did in Weimar Germany, Uruguay, and Chile, then democracy disappears; and when democracy disappears, as it did in these countries, then so do these fundamental right, liberties, and opportunities. Likewise, when democracy reappeared in these countries, so, necessarily, did these fundamental rights, liberties, and opportunities. The connection, then, is not in any sense accidental. It is inherent.

The links between political equality, democracy, and fundamental rights, liberties and opportunities run even deeper. If a country is to maintain its democratic institutions through its inevitable crises, it will need a body of norms, beliefs, and habits that provide support for the institutions in good times and bad –a *democratic culture* that is transmitted from one generation to the next. But a democratic culture is unlikely to be sharply bounded. A democratic culture will not only support the fundamental rights, liberties, and opportunities that democratic institutions require. People who share a democratic culture will, I think inevitably, also endorse and support an even larger sphere of rights, liberties, and opportunities. Surely the history of recent centuries demonstrates that it is precisely in democratic countries that liberties thrive.

Let me repeat: We need always to keep in mind that certain political institutions may be *necessary* for approximating ideal democracy to an important extent, but they may not be *sufficient* for fully closing the gap between ideal democracy and real democracy. Indeed, as is almost always the case with highly demanding ideals, we have every reason to suppose that even under the most favorable circumstances the gap will remain quite large. In short, judged against the exacting standards set by democratic ideals, real democracy as we know it is almost sure to be quite far from fully democratic.

Challenges

Will a belief in the desirability of democracy, which so many citizens in the older democratic countries seem to possess, withstand future challenges?

It is easy to dream up possible scenarios, but impossible, I think, to gauge with much accuracy their probability or consequences. Among many possible challenges, a number appear to me to be particularly important. But since an adequate exploration of any one of these would require an entire conference, and much more, I shall simply describe each of them briefly.

- a) One is the perennial challenge of achieving a desirable balance between the needs of the two basic systems, political and economic. During the last half of the twentieth century, centralized, state controlled, predominantly nonmarket economies revealed themselves not only to be inefficient but, because they

necessarily grant excessive power to political leaders, also incompatible with democratic institutions. As a result, their appeal and even their existence have all but disappeared throughout the world. In all the older democracies—indeed in all democratic countries and even in most nondemocratic countries, like China today—goods and services are predominantly produced and distributed by nonstate enterprises in more or less competitive market economies. But even though a democratic political system and a market economy are in many important ways mutually supportive, they do not make an entirely happy couple⁶. If we believe that in a democratic political order, citizens ought to be relatively equal in their *political* resources and thus in *their capacities for influencing government policies and decisions*, the source of tension between political equality and a market economy is virtually self-evident. For, among other problems, a market economy automatically generates significant inequalities in the distribution of resources of all kinds; and these resources are all readily convertible into *political resources* that may be used for acquiring influence over government. Consequently, the two systems, economic and political, remain in perpetual tension, with constant adjustment and readjustment of the boundaries between the two. Nineteenth century visions of an economic order that would eliminate that tension have collapsed throughout most of the world, and no feasible “Grand Alternative” is in sight (Dahl, 1976).

b) Although international organizations have become the locus of important decisions and will doubtless be even more so in the future, they are not now and probably will not be governed democratically. Instead they will continue to be governed, I believe, mainly by bargaining among bureaucratic and political elites,

6 I leave this problem and the three that follow undeveloped here because I have described them more fully elsewhere. On the tension between a market economy and democracy see *On Democracy*, Chapters 13 & 14. This is one of my many efforts over many years to discuss the problem of a market-economy in the context of democratic theory and practice, beginning in 1940 with an article “On The Theory of Democratic Socialism,” *Plan Age*, Vol. 6 (November-December 1940), which was recently rescued from total oblivion by its republication in *Toward Democracy: A Journey, Reflections: 1940–1997* (1997: Vol. II, 553–583). I discuss the problem of democracy and international organizations in “Can International Organizations be Democratic? A Skeptic’s View,” in Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Gordon (1999: 19–36). On the challenge of complexity, see “The Problem of Civic Competence,” in *Toward Democracy* (1997: Vol. 1, 211–228). On diversity, see “From Immigrants to Citizens: A New Yet Old Challenge to Democracies,” (1994) in *Toward Democracy* (1997: 229–250).

operating within extremely wide limits set by treaties and international agreements. Thus they pose a crucial double-edged question: Can they be made democratic, or at least more democratic, and to the extent that they cannot be made democratic, how can they be made sufficiently accountable so that their processes of making decisions are consistent with basic democratic values –notably, political equality? ⁷

c) As a result of legal and illegal immigration and a sharp rise in what is sometimes called the politics of identity, cultural diversity and cleavages are increasing in almost all of the older democratic countries. Distasteful as the thought may be, we know that cultural diversity tends to stimulate conflicts that are extremely difficult to resolve peacefully by means of civil discourse and compromise and therefore threaten to inspire actions that might impair basic democratic rights and opportunities. Yet in many of the older democratic countries in Europe –and in Japan– assimilation over several generations, in the pattern that has been fairly successful in the United States⁸, may be much more difficult to achieve. Because declining birthrates in almost all of the older democratic countries will require immigration in order to maintain an adequate labor force, the problem will probably continue for much of the twenty-first century.

d) A high likelihood remains that terrorists employing small and easily transported weapons will attack major metropolitan areas. It is by no means unlikely that some may employ nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons and cause enormous devastation, death, and disease. As the American experience shows, the human costs of terrorist attacks could stimulate strong demands for severe restrictions on civil rights, to the detriment of the democratic process.

e) Finally, let me mention what I have called the problem of civic competence (Dahl, 1997 [a]: Vol. I, 211-228). Although it would be easy to suggest standards of information and understanding

⁷ The question has stimulated a great deal of debate. For one view, see my “Can international organizations be democratic? A skeptic’s view,” (1999: 19-36) and “Is Post-national Democracy Possible?” (2001 [b]pp. 35-46). For more optimistic views, see D. Archibugi and D. Held, *Cosmopolitan Democracy* (1995).

⁸ One must always keep two major exceptions in mind: African Americans and Native Americans (i.e., indigenous peoples).

among citizens so high that they would be humanly impossible to achieve, we might reasonably lower our sights somewhat and aim for the “good-enough” or adequate citizen. Let us say that good-enough or adequate citizens would possess sufficiently strong incentives to gain a modicum of knowledge of their own interests and of the political choices most likely to advance them, as well as sufficiently strong incentives to act on behalf of these choices.

However, as public policies have become more and more complex, and, as with foreign affairs, remote from the direct experiences and immediate concerns of many citizens, to achieve even this more realistic level of adequate competence among citizens presents a formidable challenge. A large and growing body of evidence reveals that in all democratic countries, including the older democracies, many citizens are deficient in their understanding of policies that will have direct and important consequences for their basic interests. This is true not only in the most obvious case, foreign affairs, but many other matters as well. And public policies may continue to increase in complexity, and thus impose even greater obstacles to public understanding.

The institutions for facilitating public understanding that have developed in democratic countries over the past century and earlier include widespread literacy, universal education, a free press, freedom of discussion, political leaders actively competing for office in political campaigns by presenting policies, challenging the policies of the incumbent leaders, and many others. Essential as these are to an informed citizenry, they no longer seem fully up to the task of public enlightenment. In a moment I shall suggest a new and highly feasible innovation that would help to raise the level of citizen competence and engagement.

In the older democratic countries, many scholars, public intellectuals, research institutions, and others –including, no doubt, some in my audience– are engaged in creating proposals for meeting the challenges I described earlier. Although I have neither the time nor the competence to describe them here, I want to offer one example by describing a proposal designed to help meet the challenge posed by the problem of civic competence that I described a moment ago.

This is the Deliberative Poll, created by the American political scientist and political philosopher, James Fishkin⁹. Here is a recent description of its essential features:

“A Deliberative Poll is a survey of a random sample of citizens before and after the group has had a chance to deliberate seriously on an issue. The process begins by selecting a representative sample from the population and asking each person a set of questions on the issue to be considered at the Deliberative Poll. This initial survey is the standard sort conducted by social scientists doing public opinion research. The respondents are then invited to a single place for a weekend of discussion. A small honorarium and travel expenses are paid to recruit a representative sample”.

“In preparation for the event, the participants are sent carefully balanced briefing materials to lay the groundwork for the discussion. These materials are typically supervised for balance and accuracy by an advisory board of relevant experts and stakeholders. On arrival, the participants are randomly assigned to small groups with trained moderators. When they meet in small groups, participants not only discuss the general issue that provides the focus for deliberation. They also try to identify key questions that merit further exploration, and they then bring these questions to balanced panels of competing experts or policymakers in larger plenary sessions. The small groups and plenary sessions alternate throughout the weekend. At the end of the process, the respondents take the same questionnaire they were given on first contact”.

“These typically reveal big changes in the distribution of citizen opinion. When ordinary people have the chance seriously to consider competing sides of an issue, they take the opportunity to become far more informed. Their considered judgments at the end of the process demonstrate higher levels of knowledge and greater consistency with their basic values and assumptions. These experiments demonstrate that the public has the capacity to deal with complex public issues. The difficulty is that it normally lacks an institutional context that will effectively motivate it to do so” (Ackerman & Fishkin, 2003).

9 An early view of the problem is my “From Immigrants to Citizens: A New Yet Old Challenge to Democracies,” in Dahl (1997 [a]).

A Deliberative Poll along these lines is more than an abstract idea. It is a highly practical and well tested means that has already been employed on many occasions in many countries –the United States, Britain, Sweden, Denmark, and elsewhere.

In a bold new proposal Fishkin and Professor Bruce Ackerman of the Yale University Law School now want to extend Deliberative Polls to an even larger sphere. They would assemble 500 citizens for two days before a presidential election to “consider the ‘major national issues’ designated by the contenders” (Ackerman & Fishkin, 2003). I shall not attempt to present the details of their design, which they have described as “an essay in realistic utopianism.” I mention it only to show that the challenges I described earlier will engender searches for creative solutions. While many of the proposed solutions, perhaps most, will probably not be adopted, as the example of Deliberative Polling shows, feasible and realistic reforms are well within our reach.

Can the older democracies meet the challenges I have just described –and no doubt others I have not? Is it possible that under the impact of these challenges, confidence in the value of democracy might erode badly in democratic countries, where citizens are already seriously discontented with their key political institutions?

We must never forget that the democratic systems in the older democratic countries have proved to be extraordinarily sturdy and adaptable. Indeed, it is because of their capacity to survive that we can now count them as the older democracies. The older democracies have managed to weather through major economic depression, mass unemployment, inflation, war, and inept or scandalous leadership.

That a democracy is able to survive challenges like these requires, among other things, a body of citizens who are reasonably confident that the essential qualities of a democratic order render it clearly superior to any feasible nondemocratic alternative, and so they remain largely immune to the temptations of authoritarianism. The evidence we have, imperfect though it may be, appears to indicate that a great many people in democratic countries not only understand what these basic qualities are but also value them highly.

Yet it would be wrong, I believe, to ignore the challenges to democratic governments like those I have mentioned. To borrow a term widely used to describe the European Union, we confront a democratic deficit in the political institutions of the older democracies, as well as in the newer and the newest. This democratic deficit

presents a challenge to political scientists, constitutional lawyers, and political leaders.

If this challenge were to occupy a significant place in the work of social scientists, it would keep many of us fruitfully occupied for a long time to come. What is more important, our contributions might even help to keep democracy alive and healthy through the coming century.

Table 1
Democratic Countries: 1900-1995

Decade	Democratic Countries	Non Democratic countries	Percentage democracies
1900-09	8	40	17%
1920-29	22	42	34%
1940-49	25	50	33%
1960-69	40	79	34%
1994-97	86	106	45%

Source: Dahl (1989) Table 17.2 (240).

Table 2
Countries steadily democratic since 1950

1	Australia
2	Austria
3	Belgium
4	Canada
5	Denmark
6	Finland
7	France
8	Germany
9	Iceland
10	Ireland
11	Israel
11	Israel
12	Italy
13	Japan
14	Luxembourg
15	Netherlands
16	New Zealand
17	Norway

Table 2 (Continued)

18	Sweden
19	Switzerland
20	United Kingdom
21	United States

Costa Rica might reasonably be added since it made the transition to democracy a few years later.

Table 3
The Older Democracies: GDP Per Capita
(Purchasing Power Parity, US \$) 2001

GDP rank		GDP per Capita US\$
1	Luxembourg	53.780
2	United States	34.320
3	Ireland	32.410
4	Iceland	29.990
5	Norway	29.620
6	Denmark	29.000
7	Switzerland	28.100
8	Netherlands	27.190
9	Canada	27.130
10	Austria	26.730
11	Belgium	25.520
12	Australia	25.370
13	Germany	25.350
14	Japan	25.130
15	Italy	24.670
16	Israel	19.790
17	Finland	24.430
18	Sweden	24.180
19	United Kingdom	24.160
20	France	23.990
21	New Zealand	19.160

Source: UNDP, 2003

Table 4
The relation between the institutions of actual (large-scale) democracy and the requirements of an ideal democracy

In a unit as large as a country, these political institutions	...are necessary to satisfy these criteria of ideal democracy
1. Elected representatives	Effective participation Control of the agenda
2. Free, fair, and frequent elections	Voting equality Effective participation
3. Freedom of expression	Effective participation Enlightened understanding Control of the agenda
4. Alternative sources of information	Effective participation Enlightened understanding Control of the agenda
5. Associational autonomy	Effective participation Enlightened understanding Control of the agenda
6. Full inclusion of all members of the demos	Effective participation Voting equality Enlightened understanding Control of the agenda

Source: Dahl (1998) Fig. 7, 92.

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GEOPOLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY IMPERIALISM*

SAMIR AMIN**

THE ANALYSIS I propose is inscribed within an overall historical view of the expansion of capitalism, which I can not develop here¹. In this view, capitalism has always, since its origins, been a polarizing system by nature, that is, imperialistic. This polarization –in other words, the concomitant construction of dominant centers and dominated peripheries and their ever deeper reproduction at each stage– is inherent in the process of accumulation of capital operating on a worldwide scale, founded on what I have called “the globalized law of value.”

In this theory of the worldwide expansion of capitalism, the qualitative transformations of the systems of accumulation between one phase and another in its history construct the successive forms of the asymmetrical, centers/peripheries polarization, that is, of concrete

* Epilogue to the book *Guerra Global, Resistencia Mundial y Alternativas* (2003) by Wim Dierckxsens and Carlos Tablada (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales).

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1 I suggest consulting Amin (1981, 2001) and Amin & Anderson (1992).

imperialism. The contemporary world system will, consequently, continue to be imperialistic (polarizing) in any possible future, so long as the fundamental logic of its deployment continues to be dominated by capitalist relations of production. This theory associates imperialism with the process of capital accumulation on a worldwide scale, an event that I regard as one sole reality with different dimensions, which are, in fact, inseparable. It differs from the vulgarized version of the Leninist theory of “imperialism as the higher phase of capitalism” (as if the previous phases of the worldwide expansion of capitalism hadn’t been polarizing) and from contemporary post-modernist theories that term the new globalization “post-imperialistic².”

From the permanent conflict among imperialisms to collective imperialism

In its worldwide deployment, imperialism was always conjugated in plural form, from its origins in the nineteenth century until 1945. The conflict among imperialisms played a decisive role in the transformation of the world through the class struggle, by which the fundamental contradictions of capitalism are expressed. Social struggles and conflicts among imperialisms were closely articulated and this articulation is what has ruled the history of really existing capitalism. I point out in this regard that the proposed analysis differs markedly from that of the “succession of hegemonies.”

The Second World War triggered a greater transformation as regards the form of imperialism: the substitution of a collective imperialism, associating the group of centers of the capitalist world system (for simplicity’s sake, the “triad”: the United States and its Canadian outside province, Western and central Europe and Japan) for the multiplicity of imperialisms in permanent conflict. This new form of imperialist expansion underwent diverse phases of development, but is still present. The eventual hegemonic role of the United States, about which it will be necessary to specify its foundations and the ways in which it articulates with the new collective imperialism, must be situated within this perspective. These issues underline problems which are precisely the ones I would like to treat below.

² For the criticism of post-modernism and Negri’s thesis, consult the following works Amin (1997 chapter VI; 2003 [a]; 2004).

The United States obtained a gigantic benefit with the end of the Second World War: the main combatants –Europe, the Soviet Union, China and Japan– were ruined and America was in a condition to exercise its economic hegemony, since it concentrated more than half the industrial output of the world at that time and had exclusivity over the new technologies that guided development in the second half of the century. Additionally, the United States had exclusivity over nuclear weapons –the new “absolute” weapon. At Potsdam the American tone changed; days after the bombardment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki it already wielded nuclear armament.

This twofold absolute advantage –economic and technological– turned out to erode in a relatively brief time (two decades) through a double recovery, economic for capitalist Europe and Japan, military for the Soviet Union. We will thus recall how this relative pullback of American power nourished an entire era in which there flourished the discourse about the “American decline” and alternative hegemonies even waxed (Europe, Japan, and later China).

Gaullism corresponds to this stage. De Gaulle considered that the goal of the United States after 1945 had been control over the entire Old World (“Eurasia”), and that Washington had managed to make its pawns advance, destroying Europe –the real Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, that is, including “Soviet Russia,” as he used to say– by raising the specter of an “aggression” from Moscow in which he did not believe. His analyses were, from my point of view, realistic and perfect. But he was almost the only one to do this. The counter-strategy that he proposed in the face of the “Atlantism” promoted by Washington was based on Franco-German reconciliation as the basis for conceiving the construction of a “non-American Europe,” careful to keep Great Britain out of the project, since it was regarded, and justly so, as the Trojan Horse of Atlantism. Europe could then open towards a reconciliation with (Soviet) Russia. Reconciling and bringing together the three great European peoples –French, German and Russian– would put a definitive end to the U.S. project of world domination. The inner conflict inherent in the European project can be reduced to the choice between two options: an Atlantic Europe, the American project, or a non-Atlantic Europe (integrated, within this standpoint, with Russia). But this conflict hasn’t yet been resolved. Ulterior developments –the end of Gaullism, the admission of Great Britain into Europe, the growth of the East, the Soviet collapse– have hitherto favored what I term the “suppression of the European proj-

ect” and its “double dissolution in neoliberal economic globalization and in the political and military alignment with Washington” (Amin, 2000). This evolution additionally nurtures the solidity of the collective nature of the imperialism of the triad.

Is this a “definitive” (not circumstantial) transformation? Will it necessarily imply a United States “leadership” in one form or another? Before attempting to answer these questions it is necessary to explain with greater precision what the United States project consists of.

The project of the U.S. ruling class

The undertaking of extending the Monroe doctrine to the entire planet didn’t spring, in all its insane and even criminal enormity, from the head of President Bush Junior, to be put into practice by an extreme right-wing junta that achieved power by a kind of coup d’état as a consequence of dubious elections.

This is the project which the U.S. leadership class conceived after 1945 and from which it has never deviated, although its enactment has, quite obviously, undergone diverse vicissitudes. When on the verge of failure it has only been possible to put it into practice with the necessary consistency and violence at certain moments marked by specific circumstances, such as ours as a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The project has always allocated a decisive role to its military dimension. Conceived at Potsdam, as I have earlier argued, this project was grounded on the nuclear monopoly. Very quickly, the United States launched a global military strategy, splitting the world into regions and delegating responsibility for control over each of them to a U.S. Military Command. I here again recall what I wrote before the collapse of Soviet Russia regarding the priority assigned to the Middle East is this global strategic vision (Amin and others, 1992). The goal wasn’t only to “encircle the USSR” (and China likewise) but also to obtain the means to make Washington the absolute ruler of all regions of the planet. Put differently, to extend the Monroe Doctrine to the entire planet –the doctrine that in fact gave the United States the exclusive “right” over the New World in pursuance of what it defined as its “national interests.”

In this way, “the sovereignty of the national interests of the United States” was placed above all the other principles that frame the

political behavior that is regarded as a “legitimate” means, developing a systematic mistrust with regard to any supra-national right. Certainly, the imperialists of the past had not behaved differently, and those who seek to mitigate the responsibilities –and criminal behavior– of the United States leadership at the present time, seeking “excuses³,” must consider the same argument: that of indisputable historical precedents.

We would have liked to see history change as appeared to be the case after 1945. The conflict among imperialisms and the contempt for international law, given the horrors that the Fascist powers caused during the Second World War, were the elements that led to the U.N. being founded on a new principle that proclaimed the illegitimate nature of wars. The United States, we might say, did not endorse this principle; rather it has, in addition, widely overridden its early initiators. The day after the First World War, Wilson espoused founding international politics anew on different principles than those which, since the treaty of Westphalia (1648), had given sovereignty to monarchic states and later to more or less democratic nations, given that this absolute character had been put into question by the disaster to which it had led modern civilization. Little does it matter that the vicissitudes of domestic policy in the United States should have postponed the launching of these principles, since for example Franklin D. Roosevelt, and even his successor Harry S. Truman, played a decisive role in the definition of the new concept of multilateralism and in the condemnation of war that went with it –the basis of the United Nations Charter.

This beautiful initiative –one that was backed by the peoples of the entire world of that time, and which indeed represented a qualitative jump towards the progress of civilization– never enjoyed the conviction or the support of the leadership classes in the United States. The authorities in Washington always felt ill at ease within the U.N. and nowadays brutally proclaim what they had been forced to hide up to this time: they do not accept even the concept of an international law higher than what they consider to be the demands of the defense of “their national interests.” I do not consider that it is acceptable to find excuses for this return to the vision that the Nazis had developed in their day when demanding the destruction of the League of Nations. Preaching in favor of the law with as much talent and ele-

3 Such as, for example, Chaliand & Arnaud Blin (2003).

gance as was done by Dominique de Villepin before the Security Council is, unfortunately, only a “nostalgic look at the past” instead of constituting a reminder of what the future should be like. On this occasion the United States has defended a past that we thought had been definitively left behind.

In the immediate postwar period American leadership was not only accepted but requested by the bourgeoisies of Europe and of Japan. Because although the reality of a threat of “Soviet invasion” could only convince the weak in spirit, invoking it benefited not only the right but the social democrats, with their adversarial cousins the communists. It was possible to believe that the collective nature of the new imperialism was only due to this political factor, and that once Europe and Japan recovered their development they would seek to unencumber themselves from the bothersome and useless tutelage of Washington. But that wasn’t the case. Why?

My explanation requires going back to the growth of the national liberation movements in Asia and in Africa –the Bandung era, 1955-1975 (Amin, 1989)– and the backing given to them by the Soviet Union and China (each one in its own manner). Imperialism then found itself forced to act, not only accepting peaceful coexistence in vast areas that were wholly denied to it (“the socialist world”), but also by negotiating the terms of the participation of the countries of Asia and Africa in the imperialist world system. The alignment of the triad collective under American leadership seemed to be useless for dominating the North-South relations of the period. That is the reason that the Non-Aligned found themselves facing a “Western bloc” that was virtually seamless.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the vanishing of the national-populist régimes born of the national liberation struggles evidently made it possible for the United States’ project to be put vigorously into practice, especially in the Middle East, but also in Africa and Latin America. Economic rule over the world on the basis of the principles of neoliberalism, put into practice by the Group of 7 and the institutions at its service (WTO, World Bank and IMF) and the structural readjustment plans imposed on the Third World, are the expression of this. At the political level, we can verify that at the initial moment Europeans and Japanese accepted to align themselves with the United States’ project, during the Gulf war (1991) and later in those in Yugoslavia and Central Asia (2002), acquiescing in the sidetracking of the U.N. to the benefit of NATO. This initial moment

hasn't yet been surpassed, although some signs indicate a possible ending as of the Iraq war (2003[a] and [b]).

The American ruling class proclaims without a shade of reticence that it will not "tolerate" the rebuilding of any economic or military power capable of questioning its monopoly of domination over the planet and, to this end, assigns itself the right to lead "preventive wars." Three potential adversaries can be made out.

In the first place Russia, whose dismemberment constitutes the United States' greatest strategic objective. The Russian ruling class doesn't appear to have understood this to date. Rather, it seems to have convinced itself that, after having "lost the war," it could "win the peace," just as happened with Germany and Japan. It forgets that Washington needed to help those two adversaries of the Second World War, precisely to face the Soviet challenge. The new circumstances are different; the United States has no serious competition. Its option then is to definitively and utterly destroy the defeated Russian adversary. Could it be that V. Putin has understood this and could Russia beginning to dispel its illusions?

In the second place China, whose mass and economic success worry the United States, the strategic objective of which is to dismember that great country (Amin, 1996: chapter VII).

Europe ranks third in this global vision held by the new owners of the world. But in this case the American leadership doesn't appear to be concerned, at least not up to the moment. The unconditional Atlantism of some (Great Britain and the new servile powers), the "quicksand of the European project" (a point to which I shall return) and the converging interests of the dominant capital in the collective imperialism of the triad, contribute to the vanishing of the European project, kept within its status as the "European mode of the United States project." Washington's diplomacy has managed to keep Germany in its place and the reunification and conquest of Eastern Europe have, apparently, reinforced this alliance: Germany has been emboldened and is taking its tradition of "Eastward expansion" up again. Berlin's role in the dismemberment of Yugoslavia by virtue of the recognition given to the independence of Slovenia and Croatia was an expression of this (Amin, 1994), and, for the rest, it has been invited to navigate in Washington's seat. Nevertheless, the German political class appears hesitant and may be divided as to its strategic options. The option of a renewed Atlantic alignment has, as a counterpart, a strengthening of the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis, which

would turn into the most solid pillar of a European system independent from Washington.

We can thus return to our central issue: the nature and eventual solidarity of the collective imperialism of the triad and the contradictions and weaknesses of its leadership by the United States.

The collective imperialism of the triad and the hegemony of the United States

The world of today is militarily unipolar. Simultaneously, fractures appear to be outlined between the United States and certain European countries, as regards the political handling of a globalized system, aligned –in the first instance– as a whole under the principles of free trade. Are these fractures only circumstantial and of limited scope or do they announce lasting changes? It would be necessary to analyze, in all its complexity, the logic that guides the deployment of the new phase of the collective imperialism (North-South relations in ordinary language) and the objectives inherent in the United States' project. It is in this spirit that I will succinctly and successively broach five series of questions.

The nature of the evolution that contributes to the setting up of the new collective imperialism

I suggest in this subsection that the constitution of the new collective imperialism has its origin in the transformation of the conditions of competition. Some decades ago, large corporations generally waged their competitive battles in domestic markets, be they the United States (the biggest national market in the world) or the European states (despite their modest size). The victors of the national matches could situate themselves advantageously on the world market. At the present time, the size of the market needed to reach the first cycle of matches is close to 500/600 million “potential consumers.” And it is those who achieve such a market who prevail in their respective national territories. A thorough globalization is the first framework of activity of the large corporations. Expressed differently, in the domestic/worldwide duo the terms of causality have been reversed: previously, the domestic power commanded a world presence; nowadays it's the other way around. In this way, transnational firms, whatever

their nationality, have common interests in the handling of the world market. These interests are superimposed on those permanent and mercantile conflicts that define all the forms of competition inherent in capitalism, whichever they be.

The solidarity of the dominant segments of transnational capital with all members of the triad is real, and is expressed in their affiliation with globalized neoliberalism. Within this perspective the United States is considered the defender (militarily if necessary) of their “common interests.” This doesn’t mean that Washington considers that it must “equally share” the profits of its leadership. The United States is bent, on the contrary, on treating its allies as vassals and is only disposed to allow minor concessions for its underlings in the triad. Will this conflict of interests in the dominant capital reach the point of entailing a rupture in the Atlantic alliance? It is not impossible, but it is unlikely.

The place of the United States in the world economy

The generalized opinion is that the military potential of the United States only constitutes the tip of the iceberg that extends its superiority in all domains, economic, political, cultural. Submission to the U.S. hegemony will thus be inevitable. I consider, on the contrary, that in the system of collective imperialism the United States doesn’t enjoy decisive economic advantages, given that its productive system is far from being “the most efficient in the world,” since almost none of its segments would win against its competitors in a truly open market such as is imagined by neoliberal economists. Witness to this is the worsening of its trade deficit. In virtually all segments of its productive system, including high-technology goods, profits have given place to a deficit. The competition between Ariane and NASA’s rockets and between Airbus and Boeing is witness to the vulnerability of the American advantage. Against Europe and Japan in high-tech production, against China, Korea and other industrialized countries of Asia and Latin America as regards manufactured products of a banal nature, and against Europe and the Southern Cone as regards agriculture. The United States would not win the competition if it did not resort to “non-economic” means that violate the very principles of free trade imposed on its competitors!

The United States only has well-established comparative advantages in the arms sector, precisely because the latter escapes markedly from the rules of the marketplace and benefits from government support. Undoubtedly, this advantage brings others with it in the civilian sphere (the Internet is the best-known example) but it is equally the cause of severe distortions and constitute handicaps for many productive sectors.

The United States exists as a parasite to the detriment of its partners in the world system. "The United States depends for ten percent of its industrial consumption on goods whose import isn't covered by exports of domestic products" (Todd, 2002). The world produces, the United States (whose national savings are virtually nil) consumes. "The advantage" of the United States is that of a predator whose deficit is covered by the contributions of others, with their consent or by force. The means put into practice by Washington to compensate for its deficiencies are of a diverse nature: repeated unilateral violations of the principles of free trade, arms exports and search for oil profits (which presupposes the agreement of its producers, one of the real motives for the wars in Central Asia and Iraq). The main part of the American deficit is met by capital contributions originating in Europe and Japan, the South (wealthy oil countries and the purchasing classes in all the countries of the Third World, including the poorest ones), to which we might add the bleeding imposed in the name of servicing the debt imposed on virtually all countries on the periphery of the world system.

The growth of the Clinton years, glorified as the product of a "free-trade policies" that Europe unfortunately resisted, is fictitious and cannot become generalized, because it rested on capital transfers that implied the encumbrance of its partners. In all segments of the real productive system, U.S. growth has not been better than Europe's. The "American miracle" fed exclusively on the growth in expenditure caused by the worsening of social inequalities (financial and personal services: legions of lawyers and private security forces, etc.) In this sense, Clinton's free-trade approach provided a good grounding for the conditions that allowed the reactionary takeoff and ultimate victory of Bush Junior.

The causes that originated the weakening of the United States' productive system are complex and structural. The mediocrity of the general educational and training systems, and the tenacious prejudice that favors private services to the detriment of public services,

are among the main reasons of the profound crisis that American society is undergoing.

It should therefore surprise us that Europeans, far from reaching these conclusions that become manifest on verifying the insufficiency of the economy of the United States, should strive to imitate it. The liberal virus doesn't explain everything either, although it has some roles that are useful to the system, such as that of paralyzing the left. Privatization to the hilt and the dismantling of public services will only manage to reduce the comparative advantages which the "Old Europe," as Bush calls it, still benefits from. But whatever the damages they will cause over the long term, these measures offer the dominant capital, which lives on the short term, the occasion for supplementary profits.

The goals of the U.S. project

The hegemonic strategy of the United States is situated within the framework of a new collective imperialism.

(Conventional) economists lack the analytical tools that would allow them to understand the full importance of the first of these goals. Don't we hear them repeat to exhaustion that in the "new economy" the raw materials provided by the Third World will lose their importance and that, consequently, the latter will be ever more marginal within the world system? Against this naive and empty discourse, the *Mein Kampf* of the new Washington administration⁴ confesses that the United States considers it has the right to appropriate all the natural resources of the planet to satisfy its consumers first. The rush for raw materials (oil, water and other resources) is already before us in all its virulence. Especially so in the cases of resources that are running out, not only because of the exponential cancer triggered by wasteful Western consumption, but also because of the development of the new industrialization in the peripheries.

At the same time, a respectable number of the countries of the South are destined to turn into ever more significant industrial producers, both within their domestic markets and on the world market. Importers of technology, of capital, but also competitors in exports, they will be present with increasing weight in the world equilibrium.

4 I refer to *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, announced in 2002.

This doesn't involve only some countries in east Asia (like Korea), but the immense China and, tomorrow, India and the big countries of Latin America. Now then, far from this being a factor of stability, the acceleration of capitalist expansion in the South can only be the cause of violent conflicts, internally and internationally. Because this expansion cannot, under the conditions in the periphery, absorb the enormous labor force that is concentrated there. In this sense, the system's peripheries are "tempest areas." The centers of the capitalist system experience the need to exercise their domination over the peripheries and to subject their people to the ferocious discipline demanded for the satisfaction of their priorities.

Within this perspective, the American leadership has understood perfectly that, to preserve its hegemony, it enjoys three decisive advantages over its European and Japanese competitors: control over the natural resources of the globe, the military monopoly and the weight exerted by "Anglo-Saxon culture, through which the ideological dominance of capitalism is preferentially expressed. The systematic application of these three advantages explains many aspects of United States policy, especially the systematic efforts carried out by Washington for control over the oil-producing Middle East, its offensive strategy vis-à-vis Korea –taking advantage of that country's "financial crisis"– and vis-à-vis China, and the subtle maneuvering that seeks to perpetuate divisions in Europe (mobilizing Britain, its unconditional ally, to this end), and hindering a serious rapprochement between the European Union and Russia. At the level of global control over the planet's resources, the United States enjoys decisive advantages over Europe and Japan. Not only because it is the only world military power, for which reason no strong intervention in the Third World can be carried out without it, but because Europe (excluding the former USSR) and Japan lack the resources essential for the survival of their economies. For example, their dependence in the energy area will be considerable for a long time, even though it decrease in relative terms. Taking control –militarily– over this region with the war in Iraq, the United States has demonstrated that it is perfectly conscious of the usefulness of this means of pressure vis-à-vis its allies-competitors. Previously, Soviet power had understood this vulnerability of Europe and of Japan and certain Soviet interventions in the Third World had had the aim of reminding them of it, in order to lead them to negotiate in some other field. Evidently, the above-mentioned deficiencies might have been compensated via a serious

European-Russian rapprochement (Gorbachov's "common house"). That is the reason why the danger of that construction in Eurasia was experienced by Washington as a nightmare.

The conflicts that pit the United States against its partners in the triad

Although the partners in the triad share common interests in the world-wide management of collective imperialism in their relations with the South, they also have a potentially serious conflictive relationship.

The American superpower exists thanks to the capital flows that feed the parasitism of its economy and of its society. The vulnerability of the United States constitutes, in this sense, a serious threat to Washington's project.

Europe, in particular, and the rest of the world, in general, will have to choose between one of the two following strategic options: to employ the "surplus" capital (from "savings") it possesses to finance the United States deficit (vis-à-vis consumption, investment and military expenditure), or to conserve these surpluses and invest them in themselves.

Conventional economists ignore the problem, on the basis of a (senseless) hypothesis by which "globalization" will suppress nation-states, and it won't be possible to manage economic greatnesses (savings and investments) at an international level. This is a tautological reasoning which in its very premises implies the conclusions at which we seek to arrive: to justify and accept the financing of the United States' deficit by the others because, at world level, we shall find equality between savings and investment!

Why is this ineptness accepted? Undoubtedly, the teams of "of wise economists" that exist in the European political classes (and in others, such as those in Russia and China) from the electoral right and left wings are themselves the victims of the economicist alienation that I call the "liberal virus." Furthermore, this opinion expresses the political judgement of large transnational capitals, which consider that the advantages obtained from the management of the globalized system by the United States on behalf of the collective imperialism override its disadvantages: the tribute that must be paid to Washington to ensure its own permanence. Because it constitutes tribute and not a business with guaranteed good profitability. There are

countries ranked as “indebted poor nations” that are forced to ensure the service on their debt at any price. But there are also “indebted powerful nations” that enjoy all the means that would allow them to devalue their debt if they considered it necessary.

The other option for Europe (and the rest of the world) would consist in putting an end to the transfusion in the United States’ favor. The surpluses could then be put to use in the places of origin and the economies be relaunched. Because the transfusion demands the submission of the Europeans to “deflationary” (an incorrect term employed by conventional economics and that I would replace by “sentenciary”) policies, so as to be able to produce a surplus of exportable savings. This slows down the progress, always mediocre, of Europe with regard to the artificially sustained progress of the United States. Conversely, the mobilization of this surplus for local employment would make it possible to simultaneously relaunch consumption (through the reconstruction of the social dimension of an economic management devastated by the liberal virus), investment –particularly in the new technologies (and the financing of its research)– and even military expenditure (putting an end to the American “advantages” in that sphere). A choice in favor of this response to the challenge implies a new balance in social relations in favor of the working classes. Conflicts among nations and social struggles are articulated in this manner. In other words, the United States/Europe contrast doesn’t pose a fundamental opposition between the interests of the dominant segments of capital of the various partners but is the result, above all, of the differences in their respective political cultures.

The theoretical problems suggested by the preceding reflections

The complicity/competition among the partners in the collective imperialism for control over the South (sacking of its natural resources and subjection of its peoples) may be analyzed from various different angles and viewpoints. In this regard, three observations seem essential to me.

First observation: the contemporary world system, which I term collective imperialism, isn’t “less” imperialist than the preceding ones. It isn’t an “Empire” of a “post-capitalist” nature. I consequently pro-

pose a criticism of the ideological formulations of the “disguise” that is nurtured by this “à la mode” dominant discourse⁵.

Second observation: it is worth while to give a reading to the history of capitalism, globalized from its outset, anchored in the distinction among the various phases of imperialism (relations among centers/peripheries). Of course, there exist other readings of this same history, especially if they are articulated around the “succession of hegemonies” (Amin, 1996: chapter III). Personally I harbor some reservations with regard to the latter. For a start, and in essence, because it is “West-centric,” in the sense that it considers that the transformations that take place in the heart of the system, at its centers, decisively –and almost exclusively– govern the global evolution of the system. I believe that the reactions of the peoples of the peripheries in the face of imperialist deployment must not be underestimated because they caused the independence of America, the great revolutions undertaken in the name of socialism (Russia and China), and the reconquest of the independence of the Asian and African countries, and because I don’t think we can account for the history of world capitalism without taking into account the “adjustments” that these transformations have imposed on the central capitalism itself. The history of imperialism, it seems to me, has been constructed more by the conflicts of the imperialisms than by the type of “order” that the successive hegemonies have imposed. The periods of apparent “hegemony” have always been very brief and the hegemony in question is a very relative thing.

Third observation: globalization is not a synonym of “unification” of the economic system by means of the “unregulated opening of markets.” The latter –in its successive historical forms (yesterday’s “free trade,” today’s “free enterprise”)– has only been a project of the dominant capital. In actual fact, this program has almost always been forced to make adjustments in the face of demands that do not form part of its internal, exclusive and own logic. It has only been possible to put it into practice at brief moments of its history. The “freedom of commerce” promoted by the greatest industrial power of its period –Great Britain– was only effective over two decades (1860-1880) which were followed by a century (1880-1980) characterized by conflict among the imperialists and by the strong disconnection of the so-called socialist countries (as of the Russian revolution in 1917, and later that in China, and the more modest one of the countries of

5 Cf. Note 2.

national populism (Asia and Africa, 1955-1975). The current moment of reunification of the world market ("free enterprise"), inaugurated by neoliberalism starting in 1980, has extended to the entire planet with the Soviet collapse. The chaos that the latter has generated testifies to its character as a "permanent utopia of capital," phrase I applied to it in *Empire of Chaos* (Amin & Anderson, 1992).

The Middle East in the imperialist system

The Middle East, with its ancient extensions into the Caucasus and the formerly Soviet Central Asia, occupies a position of particular importance in the geostrategy/geopolitics of imperialism and, singularly, in the hegemonic project of the United States. This position is due to three factors: its oil wealth, its geographical position at the heart of the Old World and the fact that it currently constitutes the "belly" of the world system.

Access to relatively inexpensive oil is vital to the economy of the dominant triad and the best means to see that this access is guaranteed consists, properly understood, in ensuring political control over the region.

But the region likewise owes its importance to its geographical position, at the same distance from Paris, Beijing, Singapore and Johannesburg. In other times, control over this inescapable thoroughfare gave the Caliph the privilege of extracting the greatest profits from the globalization of his time (Amin, 1996: chapters I and II). After the Second World War the region, located on the southern flank of the USSR, occupied, owing to this fact, an important position within the strategy of encircling Soviet power militarily. And the region has not lost its importance despite the collapse of the Soviet adversary, because by setting itself up there, the United States could simultaneously reduce Europe to vassal status and subject Russia, China and India to a permanent blackmail born of military intervention if it were necessary. Control over the region thus effectively allows the extension of the Monroe doctrine to the Old World, which constitutes the objective of the American hegemonic project.

The efforts continuously and constantly deployed by Washington since 1945 to ensure control over the region –shutting the British and French out– hadn't been crowned with success up to the moment. Let us recall the failure of the attempt to associate the region

to NATO through the Baghdad Pact, and later the fall of the Shah of Iran, one of its most faithful allies.

The reason was simply that the project of Arab (and Iranian) nationalist populism was in conflict with the goals of the American hegemony. This Arab project had the ambition to force the powers to recognize the independence of the Arab world. That was the meaning of the “non-alignment” formulated in Bandung in 1955 by the set of liberation movements of the peoples of Asia and Africa which had the wind in their sails. The Soviets quickly grasped that by providing their support to this project they would keep Washington’s aggressive plans in check.

But history turned this page over, basically because the national populist project of the Arab world quickly exhausted its potential for transformation and because the nationalist powers turned into dictatorships without a program. The vacuum created by this state of drift cleared the path for political Islam and for the Gulf’s obscurantist autocracies, preferential allies of Washington’s. The region turned into one of the bellies of the global system, producing situations that allowed foreign interventions (including military ones) that the régimes in power were unable to contain –or even discourage– owing to their lack of legitimacy vis-à-vis their peoples.

The region constituted –and constitutes– within the American geomilitary map that covers the entire planet an area considered of top priority (as does the Caribbean), i.e., an area where the United States has invested itself with the “right” to intervene militarily. And since 1990 it hasn’t foregone doing so!

The United States operates in the Middle East in close cooperation with Turkey and Israel, its faithful and unconditional allies. Europe has remained outside the region, accepting that the United States act alone in defense of the triad’s vital global interests, namely, their oil supply. Despite the evident signs of irritation after the Iraq war, Europeans continue as a group to navigate in the region in Washington’s wake.

At the same time, Israel’s colonial expansionism constitutes a real challenge. Israel is the only country in the world that refuses to recognize definitive borders (and therefore lacks the right to be a member of the United Nations). As did the United States in the nineteenth century, Israel considers it has the “right” to conquer new areas and to treat the peoples that inhabit the new territories, colonized for

thousands of years, like Redskins. Israel is the only country that openly declares not to consider itself involved by the resolutions of the UN.

The war of 1967, planned together with Washington since 1965, obeyed diverse aims: to dampen the collapse of the national-populist régimes, break their alliance with the Soviet Union, force them to reposition themselves under American orders and open new lands for Zionist colonization. In the territories conquered in 1967 Israel put into practice a system of apartheid inspired in that of South Africa.

And it is at this point that the interests of the dominant world capital come together with those of Zionism. Because a modernized, rich and powerful Arab world would question the guaranteed access of Western countries to the sacking of their oil resources, a necessary condition for a continuation of the wastefulness associated with capitalist accumulation. The political powers of the countries of the triad, faithful servants of the dominant transnational capital, do not want a modern and powerful Arab world to exist.

The alliance between the Western powers and Israel is thus founded on the solidity of their common interests. This alliance is neither the product of a feeling of guilt among the Europeans, responsible for anti-Semitism and the Nazi crime, nor of the skill of the "Jewish lobby" in exploiting that feeling. If the Western powers thought that their interests weren't aligned with those of the Zionist colonial expansionism, they would speedily find the means to overcome their "complex" and neutralize the "Jewish lobby." I am not one of those who naively believe that public opinion in democratic countries imposes itself on the powers. We know that opinion is "manufactured" too. Israel would be incapable of a lengthy resistance against blockade measures (even moderate ones), such as the Western powers have imposed on Yugoslavia, Iraq and Cuba. It would then not be at all difficult to make Israel be reasonable and to create the conditions for a true peace, if this were desired. But it isn't.

The day after the defeat of 1967, Sadat declared that since the United States held "ninety percent of the cards" in its hands (that was the expression he used), it was necessary to break with the USSR and realign with the Western bloc, and that, thanks to this, it would be possible to obtain from Washington the concession that would exercise sufficient pressure on Israel to force it to be reasonable. Beyond this "strategic idea" of Sadat's –the inconsistency of which was proven by subsequent events– Arab public opinion remained widely incapable of understanding the dynamics of world capitalist expansion, and

much less of identifying its real contradictions and weaknesses. Don't we hear it said and repeated that "Westerners would over the long term understand that it was to their own interest to maintain good relations with the two hundred million Arabs –their immediate neighbors– and not sacrifice those relations over an unconditional support for Israel?" This implies considering implicitly that the "Westerners" in question (that is, the dominant capital) wish there to be a modernized and developed Arab world, and not understanding that, on the contrary, they wish to maintain it in impotence, and that to this end, support for Israel is useful to them.

The choice made by the Arab governments (save for Syria and Lebanon) of backing the American plan of a pretended "definitive peace" could not lead to different results than the ones it did: emboldening Israel to make its pawns advance in its expansionist project. Now openly rejecting the terms of the "Oslo Accords" (1993), Ariel Sharon only demonstrates what we should have understood earlier –that it wasn't a project for "definitive peace," but the starting point of a new stage of the Zionist colonial expansion.

The state of permanent war that Israel, along with the Western powers that back its project, impose on the region, constitutes a powerful reason that allows the autocratic Arab systems to perpetuate themselves. This blockage, vis-à-vis a possible democratic evolution, weakens Arab opportunities for renewal and allows the deployment of the dominant capital and the American hegemonic strategy. The knot is tied: the American-Israeli alliance perfectly suits the interests of both partners.

Initially, the apartheid system launched after 1967 gave the impression of being able to achieve its goals. The scared handling of daily affairs in the occupied territories by the notables and by the trading bourgeoisie seemed to be accepted by the Palestinian people. The PLO, removed from the region following the invasion of Lebanon by the Israeli army (1982), seemed to lack the means –from its faraway exile in Tunis– to question the Zionist annexation.

The first Intifada burst out in December 1987. An explosion of apparently "spontaneous" appearance, it expressed the irruption into the scene of the popular classes, and particularly of its most impoverished sectors, confined in the refugee camps. The Intifada boycotted Israeli power via the organization of systematic civic disobedience. Israel reacted brutally, but was unable to restore either its police power efficaciously or that of the Palestinian middle classes. On the

contrary, the Intifada called for a mass return of the exiled political classes, the setting up new local forms of organization and the espousal by the middle classes of the unleashed liberation struggle. The Intifada was triggered by youths, initially not organized within the formal networks of the PLO (Fatah, devoted to its chief Yasser Arafat, the DFLP, the PFLP, the Communist Party) which immediately joined the Intifada and won the sympathy of the majority of its Chebab. The Muslim Brotherhood, left behind due to the weakness of its activities during the preceding years, despite some actions by Islamic Jihad, made its appearance in 1980, and gave way to a new expression of struggle: Hamas, constituted in 1988.

As this first Intifada, after two years of expansion, exhibited signs of exhaustion, given the violent repression of the Jews (use of firearms against children, closure of the "green line" to Palestinian workers, the almost exclusive source of income for their families, etc.), the scene was set for a "negotiation" initiated by the United States that led to the Madrid agreements (1991) and later to the peace calls in Oslo (1993). These agreements allowed the return of the PLO to the occupied territories and their transformation into a "Palestinian Authority" (1994).

The Oslo accords imagined a transformation of the occupied territories into one or several Bantustans, definitively integrated into Israel's space. Within this framework, the Palestinian Authority should only be a false State –like those of the Bantustans– and, in actual fact, be the transmission belt of the Zionist order.

Having returned to Palestine, the PLO, transformed into an Authority, managed to establish its order, not without some ambiguities. Within its new structures, the Authority absorbed the majority of the Chebab that had coordinated the Intifada. It achieved legitimacy through the election of 1996, in which the Palestinians participated massively (eighty percent), while Arafat caused a plebiscite to confirm him as president of that Authority. The Authority remained, nevertheless, in an ambiguous position: would it accept the role that Israel, the United States and Europe invested it with, that of the "government of a Bantustan," or would it align itself with the Palestinian people that refused to submit?

As the Palestinian people rejected the Bantustan project, Israel decided to repudiate the Oslo agreements, which it had nevertheless dictated the terms of, to substitute them by the employment of military violence pure and simple. The provocation at the Mosques, carried out

by the war criminal Sharon in 1998 (but with the support of the Labor government that provided him with the means for the assault), and the triumphal election of this criminal at the head of the government of Israel (with the cooperation of the “doves” against Shimon Peres), were the cause of the second Intifada, currently underway.

Will the latter manage to liberate the Palestinian people from the outlook of subjection planned by the Zionist apartheid? It is too soon to say. In any case, the Palestinian people now have at their disposal a true national liberation movement with its specific characteristics. It isn't in the “sole party” style, with the appearance (rather, the reality) of “unanimity” and homogeneity. It has components that preserve their own personality, their visions of the future, even their ideologies, their militants and their clients, but which, apparently, are able to reach a mutual understanding to carry out the struggle jointly.

Control over the Middle East is certainly a key piece within Washington's project for world hegemony. How does the United States therefore imagine it will ensure control? Ten years ago Washington had already taken the initiative of moving forward with the curious project of a “Middle Eastern common market,” in which the Gulf countries would have contributed the capital, and the other countries the cheap labor, reserving for Israel the technological control and the role of forcible intermediary. Accepted by the countries of the Gulf and Egypt, the project faced the rejection of Syria, Iraq and Iran. In order to move forward it was thus necessary to topple those three regimes. Now then, this has already been done in Iraq.

The problem then is knowing what type of political régime must be imposed that will be capable of maintaining this project. Washington's propagandistic discourse speaks of “democracy.” In reality, Washington only busies itself in substituting autocracies born of an outdated populism with obscurantist, allegedly “Islamic” autocracies (compelled by respect for the cultural specificity of the “communities”). The renewed alliance with a political Islam described as “moderate” (i.e., capable of keeping the situation in hand efficiently enough to forbid any sliding into “terrorism” –that which is aimed against, and only against, the United States, of course) constitutes the axis of Washington's political option, remaining as the only possible option. It is within this perspective that reconciliation with the archaic autocracy of the system will be sought.

Faced with the deployment of the American project, Europeans invented their own project, calling it a “Euro-Mediterranean society.”

A bold project, filled with talk, but which likewise proposed to “reconcile the Arab countries with Israel.” At the same time that they excluded the Gulf countries from the “Euro-Mediterranean dialogue,” the Europeans recognized that handling them was exclusively Washington’s responsibility (Amin 2003 [d]).

The contrast between the reckless audacity of the American project and Europe’s weakness is a beautiful indicator that the Atlantism that actually exists ignores any sharing (the splitting of responsibilities and association in decision-taking, placing the United States and Europe in equal conditions). Anthony Blair, who considers himself the advocate of the construction of a “unipolar” world, believes he can justify this option because the Atlantism that would be allowed would be founded on sharing. Washington’s arrogance undercuts this vain hope further every day, even though it may serve simply to deceive European opinion. The realism of the intention of Stalin, who had said at the time that the Nazis “didn’t know where to stop,” is applicable to the junta that governs the United States. And the “hopes” that Blair attempts to revitalize resemble those that Mussolini placed on his ability to “calm down” Hitler.

Is another European opinion possible? Does Chirac’s discourse, opposing the “unipolar Atlantic” world (apparently understanding well that the United States’ unilateral hegemony reduces the European project to being solely the European mode of Washington’s project) against the construction of a “multipolar” world, announce the end of Atlantism?

For this possibility to become a reality, it would still be necessary for Europe to be able to emerge from the quicksand on which it skids.

The quicksand of the European project

All European governments up to now have allied themselves with the thesis of liberalism. This alliance means nothing other than the end of the European project, its double dissolution, economic (the advantages of the European economic union being dissolved within economic globalization) and political (Europe’s political and military autonomy disappears). There no longer exists, at this time, any European project. It has been substituted by a North Atlantic project (or potentially that of the triad) under American command.

The “made in U.S.A.” wars have certainly awakened public opinion and even certain governments (in the first place that of France, but

also those of Germany, Russia and China). Nevertheless, these governments haven't put into question their faithful alignment with the demands of liberalism. This major contradiction must be overcome in one way or another, be it by submitting to Washington's demands, be it through a real break that puts an end to Atlantism.

The most important political conclusion I extract from this analysis is that Europe won't be able to emerge from Atlantism as long as the political alliances that define its power blocs remain centered on the dominant transnational capital. Only if social and political struggles should manage to modify the content of these blocs and impose new historic compacts between capital and labor will Europe be able to take some distance with respect to Washington, an event that would, in consequence, allow the rebirth of an eventual European project. Under such conditions Europe might –indeed should– commit itself equally at the international level, in its relations with the East and with the South, to another path, different from the one set out by the exclusive demands of collective imperialism, thus dampening its participation in the long march “beyond capitalism.” Stated differently, Europe will be leftist (the term “left” here being employed most seriously) or it won't be Europe.

Conciliating an adherence to liberalism with the affirmation of a European political autonomy is the goal of certain fractions of the European political classes concerned with preserving the exclusive positions of big capital. Will they be able to achieve it? I strongly doubt it.

In counterpoint, will the European popular classes be able to overcome the crisis they face? I believe it possible, precisely for the reasons that cause the political culture of certain European countries, at least, to be different from that of the United States, and a renaissance of the left could take place. The condition is evidently that they free themselves from the virus of liberalism.

The “European project” was born as the European mode of the Atlantic project of the United States, conceived the day after the Second World, within the spirit of the “Cold War” launched by Washington –a project with which the European bourgeoisie, simultaneously weakened and fearful of its own working classes, aligned itself in a practically unconditional manner.

Nevertheless, the deployment itself of this project –of doubtful origin– has progressively modified important aspects of the problem and of its challenges. Western Europe managed to put an end to its economic and technological backwardness with respect to the United

States. At the same time, the Soviet enemy is no longer there. The deployment of the project brought together the main adversaries that for a century and a half had marked European history: the three biggest countries on the continent –France, Germany and Russia–achieved mutual reconciliation. All this evolution is, from my point of view, positive, and is filled with an even more positive potential. Certainly, this deployment is inscribed within economic bases inspired by the principles of liberalism, but a liberalism tempered until the 1980s by the social dimension taken into consideration by and through the “historic social-democratic commitment,” which forced capital to adjust to the demands for social justice expressed by the working classes. Afterward the deployment continued within a new social framework, inspired by an “American-style,” utterly anti-social liberalism.

This last turn has hurled European societies into a multidimensional crisis. For a start there is the economic crisis of the neoliberal option. A crisis worsened by the alignment of the European countries in the face of the economic demands of their American leader, the former consenting to finance the latter’s deficit to the detriment of their own interests. Then the social crisis, heightened by the growth of the resistance and of the struggles of the popular classes against the fatal consequences of the conservative option. Lastly, the attempt at a political crisis –the refusal to align themselves, at least unconditionally, with the United States option in the endless war against the South.

How will the European peoples face this triple challenge?

Europeans are divided into three different groups:

- Those who defend the neoliberal option and accept the leadership of the United States, virtually without conditions.
- Those who defend the neoliberal option, but would wish for a politically independent Europe, outside the American alignment.
- Those who would wish for (and struggle for) a “social Europe,” that is to say, capitalism tempered by a new social commitment between capital and labor operating on a European scale, and simultaneously a political Europe practicing “other relations” (friendly, democratic and peaceful) with the South, Russia and China. The overall public opinion in all Europe has, during the European Social Forum (Florence 2000) and on the occasion of the war against Iraq, expressed its sympathy for the principles

of this position.

There are certainly others, the “non-Europeans,” in the sense that they do not think that any of the pro-European options are possible or desirable. These are still in a minority, but are certainly called on to become strengthened within one of two fundamentally different options:

- A right-wing “populist” option, which rejects the progression of supranational political –and even economic– powers, with the obvious exception of those of transnational capital.
- A popular left-wing, national, citizen-based, democratic and social option.

What are the forces on which each of these tendencies lean and what are their respective chances of success?

The dominant capital is liberal by nature. In this sense, it logically supports the first of these three options. Anthony Blair represents the most consistent expression of what I have termed the “collective imperialism of the triad.” The political class, gathered behind the star-spangled banner, is ready, if it becomes necessary, to “sacrifice the European project” –or at least to dispel any illusion in that regard– employing contempt for its origins: being the European mode of the Atlantist project. But Bush, like Hitler, does not conceive any allies other than unconditionally aligned subordinate ones. That is the reason why significant segments of the political class, including the right –even though the latter is, in principle, the defender of the interests of the dominant capital– reject aligning themselves with the United States as they yesterday did with respect to Hitler. If there is a possible Churchill in Europe, he would be Chirac. Will he be?

The strategy of the dominant capital may reach accommodation within a “right-wing anti-Europeanism,” which would be content with demagogic nationalist rhetoric (wielding the issue of emigrants, for example) while submitting in actual fact to the demands of a liberalism that isn’t specifically “European,” but globalized. Aznar and Berlusconi constitute the prototypes of these allies of Washington’s. The servile political classes of Eastern Europe are equally so.

In this regard, I believe that the second option chosen by the most important Europeans (France-Germany) is hard to sustain. Does it express the ambitions of a sufficiently powerful capital to be able to

emancipate itself from the tutelage of the United States? I have no answer save to indicate that intuitively I see it as rather unlikely.

This option is, nevertheless, that of the allies in the face of an American adversary that constitutes the main enemy of all humanity. I am persuaded that, if they persist in their choice, they will have to face the logic of the unilateral project of that capital (liberalism) and to seek alliances on the left (the only ones that might strengthen their project of independence vis-à-vis Washington). The alliance among sets two and three is not impossible. Just as was the case with the anti-Nazi alliance.

If this alliance takes shape, will it have to operate exclusively within the European framework if they are all incapable of renouncing the priority given to that framework? I don't think so, because this framework, as constituted, systematically only favors the option of the first, pro-American group. Would it thus be necessary to cause Europe to burst apart and definitively renounce its project?

I don't consider that necessary either, or even desirable. Another strategy is possible: that of allowing the European project to "lie dormant" for some time in its current stage of development, and in a parallel manner build other alliance axes.

A first priority, then, is the construction of a political and strategic Paris-Berlin-Moscow alliance, extended to Beijing and Delhi if it were possible. And I say specifically political with the aim of giving it the international pluralism and all the roles they ought to have within the United Nations. Strategic, in the sense of building up military forces capable of meeting the American challenge. These three or four powers have all the means (economic, technological and financial), reinforced by their military traditions, alongside which the United States pales. The American challenge and its criminal ambitions are imposed by virtue of their unrestrained character. Building an anti-hegemonic front is currently as high a priority as in the past it was to build an anti-Nazi alliance.

This strategy would reconcile the "pro-Europeans" with groups two and three and with the "non-Europeans" on the left. Favorable conditions would be created for later taking up a European project again, which would probably also incorporate a Great Britain freed from its subjection to the United States and an Eastern Europe that has cast off its servile culture. We must be patient because this will take quite some time.

No progress of a European project will be possible insofar as the American strategy isn't deflected from its course.

Europe in the face of its own Arab South and the Mediterranean

The Arab World and the Middle East occupy a decisive spot in the hegemonic project of the United States. The response that the Europeans offer to the American challenge in the region will be one of the decisive tests that the European project itself will face.

The problem consists in knowing if the coastal people of the Mediterranean and its prolongations –Europeans, Arabs, Turks, Iranians and the people of the countries of Africa– will or will not orient themselves towards a representation of their security that differs from that which is guided by the primacy of the preservation of America's world hegemony. Pure reason ought to cause them to evolve in that direction. But up to the moment Europe has given no sign of going that way. One of the reasons that might partly explain the European inertia is that the partners in the European union, albeit not too divergent, bear a coefficient of relative priorities that differs greatly from one country to the next. The Mediterranean façade isn't central to the industrial polarization of developed capitalism; the façades of the North Sea, of the American Atlantic Northeast and of central Japan have a density lacking a common denominator. For the people in Northern Europe –Germany and Great Britain– the danger of chaos in the countries located to the South of the Mediterranean does not loom as seriously as it does for Italians, Spaniards and Frenchmen.

The diverse European powers each had, until 1945, Mediterranean policies of their own, often conflicting ones. After the Second World War, the states of Western Europe had practically no Mediterranean or Arab policy, whether individually or in common, beyond that which was implied in the alignment demanded by the United States. Within this framework, Great Britain and France, which had their colonial possessions in the region, fought to preserve their advantages. Great Britain gave up Egypt and Sudan (1954) and, after their defeat in the adventure of the tripartite aggression (1956), a violent change of direction ensued which, in the late '60s, implied the abandonment of their influence in the coastal countries of the Gulf.

France, eliminated since 1945 from Syria, finally accepted the independence of Algeria (1962), but preserved a certain nostalgia for its influence in the Maghreb and in Lebanon, emboldened by the local ruling classes, at least in Morocco, Tunis and Lebanon. In parallel fashion, the construction of Europe did not substitute the withdrawal of the colonial powers by a new common policy operating in this sense. Let us recall that, after the Israeli-Arab war of 1973, the prices of oil were readjusted and the European Community, startled in its dreams, discovered it had "interests" in the region. But this awakening did not trigger any significant initiative on its part, for example with regard to the Palestinian problem. Europe, both in this domain and in others, continued to vegetate and ultimately to be inconsistent. Some progress in the direction of autonomy vis-à-vis the United States was seen in the '70s, but after the Venice Summit (1980) it was eroded during the '80s, to finally disappear with the alignment alongside Washington that was adopted during the Gulf War. It's for this reason that European perceptions regarding the future of the relations between Europe and the Arab and Iranian World must be studied on the basis of analyses pertinent to each one of the European states.

Great Britain has no Mediterranean or Arab policy that is specific to it. In this domain, and in others of British society in all its political expressions (Conservatives and Laborites), the option has been an unconditional alignment with the United States. It is, in this case, a fundamental historical choice, which far surpasses specific circumstances and that considerably reinforces the submission of Europe to the demands of American strategy.

For different reasons, Germany has no specific Arab or Mediterranean policy either and will probably not attempt to develop any in the near future. Weakened by its division and its Status, the FRG devoted all its efforts to its economic development, accepting having a low and ambiguous political profile with regard to the United States and the Europe of the EEC. In an initial instance, the reunification of Germany and its reconquest of full international sovereignty did not modify this behavior; rather, on the contrary, they accentuated the expressions of it. The reason is that the dominant political forces (conservatives, liberals and social democrats) chose to give priority to the expansion of Germanic capitalism in central and eastern Europe, reducing the relative importance of a common European strategy, both on the political level and on that of economic integration. It

remains to be seen if this trend has currently been reversed, as seems to be suggested by Berlin's attitude in the face of the Iraq War.

France's positions are more nuanced. A both Atlantic and Mediterranean country, the heir of a colonial Empire, classed among the victors of the Second World War, France did not give up expressing itself as a power. During the first postwar decade, succeeding French governments attempted to preserve the colonial positions of the country through anti-Communist and anti-Soviet Atlantist positions. Nevertheless, they did not gain Washington's support, as was demonstrated by the position of the United States during the tripartite aggression against Egypt (1956). The Mediterranean and Arab policy of France was simply retrograde. De Gaulle simultaneously broke with paleo-colonial and with pro-American illusions, and conceived the triple project of modernizing the French economy, leading a decolonization process that would allow its substitution by neocolonialism in the face of the old formulas, and compensating the weaknesses intrinsic to any medium-sized country like France through European integration. Within this last perspective De Gaulle conceived a Europe capable of being autonomous, not only at the economic and financial level, but also at the political level and even, ultimately, at the military level, just as he conceived, over the long term, the association of the USSR with the construction of Europe ("the Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals"). But Gaullism did not survive its founder and, starting in 1968, French political forces, both of the classic right and of the socialist left, gradually returned to their previous attitudes. Their vision of the construction of Europe became reduced to the sole dimension of a "common market" between France and Federal Germany (at the moment when German reunification occurred, in Paris they were a bit surprised and uneasy...) and to the invitation, employing pressure, made to Great Britain to join the EEC (forgetting that Britain would be the Americans' Trojan Horse in Europe). Naturally, this change implied the abandonment of any Arab policy worthy of the name of France, that is to say, a policy that went beyond the simple defense of immediate mercantile interests. At the political level, France objectively behaved, both in the Arab world and in sub-Saharan Africa, as a supplementary force in support of the American strategy of hegemony. It is within this framework that one must place the Mediterranean discourse, which calls for tying the Maghreb countries to the European chariot (in the same way that Turkey, now in crisis, was tied), which implied breaking the prospect of a unitary Arab

approach and abandoning the Mashrek in the face of Israeli-American intervention. Undoubtedly, the Maghreb's ruling classes bear responsibility, given the sympathy they demonstrated for this project. Nevertheless, the Gulf Crisis dealt a strong blow to this project, and the popular masses of Northern Africa expressed, on this occasion and strongly, their solidarity with the Maghreb, a totally foreseeable event.

Italy is, including because of its geographical position, a country that is very sensitive to Mediterranean problems. This does not mean that it has a real Mediterranean and Arab policy, and much less that the latter has efficacy and autonomy. Because of its marginal capitalist development, Italy was forced to inscribe its Mediterranean ambitions within European tutelage in an alliance with other powers in the area, more decisive than it is itself. Since its unity was achieved in the middle of the last century with Mussolini's fall in 1943, Italy hesitated between an alliance with the owners of the Mediterranean –i.e., with Great Britain and France– or with those able to contest Anglo-French positions, namely the Germans. Atlantism, which is exercised in Italy within a vision that implies a foreign political profile under the tutelage of the United States, has been dominant in the actions and options of Italian governments since 1947. It is equally dominant, albeit from an even more ideological standpoint, among certain sectors of the lay bourgeoisie (the republicans and liberals, and some socialists). Because among the Christian Democrats there exists the pressure of the universalism of the Catholic tradition. For this reason it is significant that the Pope has, often, adopted more retrograde positions vis-à-vis the Arab peoples (particularly on the Palestinian problem) and the Third World than that of the numerous Italian and Western governments in general. The step to the left by part of the Catholic Church, under the influence of Latin America's Theology of Liberation, currently reinforces this universalism, of which we find lay versions in pacifist, ecologist and pro-Third World movements. The "mittel" European current has its roots in the Italian nineteenth century and in the North-South split that Italian unity hasn't managed to mitigate. Allied to the interests of large Milanese capitals, it proposes bestowing priority on the economic expansion of Italy toward the European East, in close association with Germany. Within this framework, Croatia currently constitutes an immediate objective. Properly understood, this option would imply that Italy continue the tradition of a low international profile, and above all remain marginal in its relations with the Mediterranean South. A par-

allel option by Spain would isolate it even further from the European concert, reducing it to its lowest common denominator. The Mediterranean current, which is still weak, despite the contribution that universalism could entail for it, is, for this reason, expressed in a "Levantine" version: it is a question of "doing business" here or there, without worrying about the framework of political strategy in which the latter are inscribed. To acquire another, more noble consistency, associating Italy to economic openings that are inscribed within a perspective of reinforcing its autonomy and that of its Arab partners, it would be necessary for a convergence to be achieved between this project and universalist ideas, particularly those of part of the Italian left, communist and Christian. The Italian right, for its part, reunited under the leadership of Berlusconi in power, has opted to be inscribed under the tutelage of the Washington-London Atlantic axis. The behavior of the police forces during the G8 meeting in Genoa (July 2001) clearly expresses this option.

Spain and Portugal occupy an important spot in the geostrategy of world hegemony of the United States. The Pentagon considers, in fact, that the Azores-Canaries-Gibraltar-Balearics axis is essential for keeping watch over the North and South Atlantic and looking after the entry into the Mediterranean. The United States forged its alliance with those two countries immediately after the Second World War, without exercising the least concern over their fascist nature. On the contrary, in fact, the anti-communism of the Salazar and Franco dictatorships served the American hegemonic cause well, making it possible for Portugal to be admitted into NATO and to establish American bases of prime importance on Spanish soil. In counterpart, the United States and its European allies backed Portugal unreservedly until the end of its failed colonial war.

The democratic evolution of Spain after Franco's death was not the occasion for a questioning of the country's integration into the American military system. On the contrary, in fact, the formal accession of Spain to NATO (in May 1982) was the object of real electoral blackmail that made it out that participation in the EEC demanded that accession, which was opposed by the majority of Spanish public opinion.

Afterward, Madrid's alignment with Washington's positions has been unreserved. In counterpart, the United States may apparently have intervened to "moderate" Morocco's claims and even to attempt to convince Great Britain with regard to Gibraltar. In this sense, we

may doubt the actual reality of these interventions. The reinforced Atlantist alignment of Madrid translated into radical changes in the organization of the Spanish armed forces, described by analysts as a "movement toward the South." In the Spanish tradition, in fact, the army was spread out over the country's entire territory. Additionally conceived –with Franco, in an evident manner– as a domestic police force more than as a force aimed outward, the Spanish army continued to be rustic and, despite the marked attention that the supreme power in Madrid bestowed on the cadres of generals and officers, had not been the object of a true modernization, as was the case with France, Great Britain and Germany.

The socialist governments, and afterwards those on the right, proceeded to a reorganization of Spanish forces to combat on a potential "Southern front" and committed themselves to a modernization of the land army, of the aviation and of the navy. This change, demanded by Washington and NATO, is one of the numerous manifestations of the new American hegemonic strategy, substituting the South for the East in the defense of the West. This is accompanied in Spain by a new discourse that brings into evidence a "hypothetical enemy coming from the South," the identification of which leaves no room for doubt. Curiously, this discourse of the democratic (and socialist) Spanish media recalls the old tradition of the Reconquest, very popular among the Catholic circles of the army. The change in the Spanish armed forces is thus the sign of a determination on Spain's part to exercise an active role in the midst of NATO, in the framework of the reorientation of Western strategies, foreseeing interventions in the Third World. For some time now, the Iberian Peninsula constitutes the first stopover on the Washington-Tel Aviv axis, the principal European bridgehead of the American Rapid Deployment Force (which had a decisive role in the Gulf War), completed with bases in Sicily (which, likewise, had never seen service until the operations against the Arab World such as Libya, the Israeli bombardment of Tunis, etc.) and, curiously, the facilities awarded by Morocco. Evidently, this Western option empties the "Euro-Arab" discourse of any serious content. The new, democratic Spain, which pretends to activate a policy of friendship in the direction of Latin America and the Arab World, has actually directed its steps in an opposite direction from that of the demands of its proclamation of principles.

The right-wing government led by Aznar has confirmed this Atlantist alignment of Madrid's. Even more than Italy, Spain rejects

capitalizing on its Mediterranean position to the benefit of a new European policy aimed at the Arab World, Africa and the Third World, and to distance itself from the demands of the American hegemony. The French idea of a Mediterranean group in the midst of the European Union remains, for these reasons, suspended in mid-air and without serious points of support. At the same time, in the economic sphere, Spanish capital, the heir of the Francoist tradition, has placed its main hopes for expansion on the development of agreements with Germany and Japan, invited to participate in the modernization of Catalonia.

While it existed, the line of East-West confrontation passed through the Balkans. The compulsory alignment of the states of the region with Moscow or Washington –with the sole exception of Yugoslavia since 1948 and of Albania as of 1960– had placed a damper on the local nationalist disputes that had turned the Balkans into the European backyard.

Turkey placed itself in the Western camp since 1945, after having put an end to its neutrality with regard to Hitler's Germany. The Soviet claims to the Caucasus formulated by Stalin following victory were rejected by Ankara thanks to Washington's resolute support. In counterpart, Turkey, a member of NATO, despite its less than democratic political system, housed the American bases closest to the USSR. There is no doubt that Turkish society continues to be part of the Third World, although after Atatürk the country's ruling classes have proclaimed the European part of the New Turkey, knocking on the door of a European Union that doesn't want it. A faithful ally of the United States and of its European partners, will Turkey wish to reclaim its past and play an active role in the Middle East, making the West pay for the services it might provide for it in that region? It appears that the problem of the Kurds, whose very existence it fails to recognize, has hitherto led it to hesitate in the adoption of this option. The same applies to a potential pan-Turanian option, suggested by certain Kemalist circles, and later consigned to the historical museum. But currently, the breakup of the USSR might constitute an invitation for the power of Ankara to take the leadership of a Turkish bloc that, from Azerbaijan to Sinkiang, would dominate Central Asia. Iran always expressed its fears with regard to a development of this type, which would not only question the status of Iran's southern Azerbaijan but also the security of its vast northern Asian border with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Greece did not enlist in the Soviet camp. It was compelled and forced by the British intervention of 1948 to align with the United States. In conformity with the Yalta Agreements, the USSR, as we all know, abandoned the Greek resistance to its fate, a resistance led by the Communist Party which, nevertheless, in that country as in Yugoslavia and Albania, had freed the nation and for that reason conquered majority popular support. In this way, the Westerners were forced to give their support against that movement to successive repressive regimes and, lastly, to a dictatorship of fascist colonels, without seeing this as a major contradiction with its discourse, according to which NATO would protect the "free world" against the totalitarian "Satan." The return of Greece to democracy, through PASOK's electoral victory (1981), risked, under these conditions, questioning the country's fidelity to NATO. The European Community then came to Washington's support in order, as in the case of Spain, to link the Greek candidacy to the EEC with its continuing participation within the Atlantic alliance. This integration into the EEC was strongly discussed by Greek public opinion at the time. Papandreou's choice to join despite everything, after some hesitation and in spite of the Third World and neutralist principles of PASOK, appears to have unleashed an irreversible evolution even at the level of mindsets, flattering the Greek people's aspirations towards modernity and Europeanism. Nevertheless, Greece's new European partners haven't offered that country much, keeping it all the time in the position of poor relative in the construction of the community.

Athens' faithfulness to the Euro-American West hasn't earned it real support in its conflict with Turkey. Indeed, even though the Greek dictatorship bore a measure of responsibility in the Cypriot tragedy (1974), the open Turkish aggression (operation Attila) and the later creation of a Turkish Republic of Cyprus, in clear violation of the island's status, not only have been accepted, but probably also endowed with the services of the Pentagon, in the face of which Europe once again gives way. It is evident that, to the United States, friendship with Turkey, a considerable regional military power, ranks far above Greece, however democratic the latter may be.

The Balkans-Danube region as a group (Yugoslavia, Albania, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria) in 1945 came under Moscow's aegis, be it through Soviet military occupation and acceptance by the Yalta partners, or through their own liberation and the choice of that option by the people of Yugoslavia and Albania.

Tito's Yugoslavia, isolated during the years 1948-1953, between Moscow's ostracism and Western anti-Communism, had successfully achieved a strategy of construction of a "non-aligned" front, which earned it a friendship with the Third World, particularly after the Bandung Conference (1955). Analysts of the period's geostrategic thinking curiously point out that this approach was not very sensible given the country's Mediterranean dimension. Perhaps Italy's abandonment after the Second World War of its traditional visa requirements and the solution found in 1954 to the difficult problem of Trieste were the reasons for this "historical forgetfulness." Yugoslavia lived after that as a state concerned above all with the problems of balance in its regional relations and, especially, by that of the world balance between the superpowers. Because, in the first place, it had managed to capitalize on the double Northward and Danubian attraction of Croatia and Slovenia and the Russian and Balkanic one of Serbia. The rapprochement initiated by Khrushchev and continued by his successors, recognizing Tito's neutrality as positive in the world arena, as well as the weakening of the régimes of the Warsaw Pact as of the '60s and especially in the '70s, for a time guaranteed Yugoslavia's security, which had ceased to be regarded as the crux of any regional conflict. Yugoslavia's diplomacy was then able to deploy in the international arena, giving the country a disproportionate weight in regard to its size. But, although this diplomacy had undoubtedly gained points in Asia, in Africa and in Latin America, it failed in Europe, where its call for an expansion of the neutrals' front never found a favorable echo. Nevertheless, vis-à-vis the Europe of NATO, from the North to the South of the continent, between two adversarial military pacts, Sweden, Finland and Austria might have been able to seek positive common initiatives that differed from the spirit of the Cold War. Later, the Greece of PASOK attempted to expand the European neutral field, this idea leading in 1982 to the proposal for cooperation toward the de-nuclearization of the Balkans, aimed, simultaneously, at certain member countries of the two alliances (Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria) or at neutrals (Yugoslavia and Albania). These proposals also found no echo at all.

The decomposition of Southeastern Europe as of 1989 changed the entire problem. The erosion and then the collapse of the legitimacy of the régimes –founded on a specific development, whatever their limitations and their negative aspects may have been– caused the bursting apart of the unity of the leading class, the fractions of which attempted to found their legitimacy on nationalism. The conditions were pro-

vided not only for allowing the offensive of savage capitalism underpinned by the United States and the European Union, but also for Germany to take up the initiative in the region again, throwing fuel into the fire –through its recognition of the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, which the European Union itself reaffirmed– and consequently accelerating the splitting asunder of Yugoslavia and the civil war. Curiously, the Europeans attempted to impose in Bosnia the coexistence of the communities that they had insisted on separating! If it is possible for Serbs, Croats and Muslims to coexist in the tiny Yugoslavia that Bosnia turns out to be, why couldn't they have coexisted in the large Yugoslavia? Evidently, a strategy of this type would not have had any success, which allowed the United States to intervene in the very heart of Europe. In Washington's strategy, the Balkans-Caucasus-Central Asia axis is a prolongation of the Middle East.

From the analyses proposed above and which concern the political and strategic options of the countries of the Northern Coast of the Mediterranean I extract an important conclusion: the majority of these countries, yesterday faithful backers of the United States in the East-West conflict, continue aligned with the American strategy of hegemony vis-à-vis the Third World, and particularly vis-à-vis the Arab countries and those of the Red Sea-Gulf region. The other countries (Balkan and of the Danube), yesterday involved in some manner or another in the East-West conflict, have ceased to be active agents in the permanent North-South conflict, and have turned into passive objects in the face of Western expansionism.

Conclusions: the Empire of Chaos and the permanent war

I have termed the project of dominance of the United States –the extension of the Monroe doctrine to the entire planet, particularly since the collapse of Soviet Russia (1991)– the Empire of Chaos. The growth of the resistance of the nations of the Old World announces that they will not accept submitting so easily. The United States will be called on to substitute international law by recourse to permanent warfare (a process that has begun in the Middle East, but which already points toward Russia and Asia), slipping down the fascist slope (the “Patriot Act” has already given its police powers with regard to foreigners –“aliens”– that turn out to be similar to those the Gestapo had).

Will the European states, partners in the system of collective imperialism of the triad, accept this drift that will place them in subordinate positions? The thesis which I have developed places the accent not so much on the conflicts of interest of the dominant capital as on the difference that separates the political cultures of Europe from that which characterizes the historic shaping of the United States, and finds in this new contradiction one of the main reasons for the probable failure of the United States' project⁶.

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⁶ See Amin (2004; 2003 [b]).

ARE THERE OPEN PATHS FOR LATIN AMERICA?

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THE INSPIRATION for this paper is obvious. I refer to the Eduardo Galeano's classic, *The Open Veins of Latin America*. We ask ourselves, therefore, can the open veins of Latin America be transformed into open paths toward its liberation, toward the reduction of its internal inequalities, toward the return of economic development, toward a new place in the contemporary world? Is there a dialectical transformation of "open veins" into "open paths," or shall we continue to read Borges as master of our mirage?

It is convenient not to make a precarious repetition of what can be found expressed in ECLAC papers: the last two decades witnessed stagnation, backward movement or, at most, in some cases, mediocre growth. Latin America was subjugated by neoliberalism –let us call it by the name with which it became popularized in criticism, although it is, in itself, somewhat confusing– in the last period of last century, and continues under its domination. We are the region with the greatest inequality, even in comparison with Africa. Internally, inequality

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increased in our societies between the beginning of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000. Mexico and Brazil almost haven't changed in this period but more egalitarian societies such as Argentina and Uruguay stood out for a process of a radical social polarization. The known exception is the usual one: Cuba, which receives us so generously, but whose own progress is truncated by the general stagnation of Latin America, which causes it to take on the risks of "socialism in one country alone." Which in no way diminishes but rather exalts its dignity and the immense sacrifices of its people.

Within the general diagnosis, specific situations are hidden: from the sizzling transformation of Mexico into the largest individual exporter to the United States, within the sphere of FTA –which, nevertheless, did not prevent the default of its foreign debt in the early 1990s nor allowed a solution to the issue of Mexican inequality– to the deafening failure and incredible regression of Argentina, once, in the early twentieth century, one of the world's five largest economies. Chile saw the least erratic development since the Pinochet dictatorship, but its workers already taste the bitter grapes –in a beautiful wine-growing country– of privatized social security, now that the moment has come to pay the bill. In any case, the Chilean isolationism with regard to Latin America places it in an almost exclusive dependence on the North American market, and in fact Chile has regressed in terms of the social division of labor –it has returned to its condition of an primary-exporting economy still anchored in the good old state-owned copper. The Uruguayan and Paraguayan economies suffer the effects of the Argentine backsliding and of Brazil's neoliberalism and MERCOSUR hasn't been enough, in the state in which it finds itself, to give them their dynamism back. Colombia has become a tragedy, the characteristics of which we are all familiar with, and is on its way to transforming itself into a non-State and into a non-nation. Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia experienced such violent spasms that not even the most boldest social science will risk making predictions: it is possible to go from the Shining Path to Alberto Fujimori and from the latter to Alejandro Toledo, from experiments in the Margaret Thatcher style *avant la lettre* to Evo Morales, and from dollarization with a forceps to the anti-capitalist indigenous movement, virtually without mediation. Venezuela suffered the most unrestrained corruption under the most social-democratic party the continent has known, and has been daily experiencing innumerable attempts to destabilize its Bolivarian revolution, including the scandalous attack

against the presidency of the republic personally led by the president of the businessmen's association.

Rather than a rosary of our weaknesses, what this brief listing describes is the extremely strong erosion of democratic and republican institutions by neoliberalism, an open declaration of war by capital against the possibilities of political action. Paraphrasing Atilio Boron –this Executive Secretary who with his courageous team carried out the true miracle of recovering our CLACSO– capitalism in the periphery is showing itself to be totally incompatible with democracy.

After the crisis of the dictatorships, a breath of liberty swept over Latin America. All over the continent, the revitalization of politics operated by the conjunction of rising social movements, renewed labor movements (clear-cut case of Brazil), the foreign-debt crises, the creation of new mass parties centered on the workers (once again the Brazilian example with the Workers' Party or PT), the patching up of misguided party antagonisms (typical being the Chilean reconciliation between Christian Democrats and socialists), the new alignment with Argentina's Justicialism, the popular rejection of *Andresist* corruption in Venezuela and a renewed identification with Bolivarian ideas, generated the miracle of the democratization of Latin America. And with it, the promises of banishing the almost Auschwitzian neoliberalism experiments. For the first time in the history of the region, in its thirty-five countries there existed no dictatorial régime. It seemed that the grotesque mix of dictators, minor chieftains, and petty tyrants in a few pseudo-democratic régimes had ended, to give way to the unanimous predominance of democracy.

However, something entirely unforeseen happened. Perhaps we had underestimated the "dirty work" of the dictatorships, the havoc wreaked in the social structure, in the increase in inequalities, in the governmental ability to regulate conflicts, in the identity between the national project for the dominant classes and the national project for the dominated classes. A kind of asynchrony, to say the least, had taken place: the bourgeoisies gave up on a national project, and the space of politics was, thus, transformed into a confinement for the dominated classes. The wave of democratization was encapsulated by globalization, with all its consequences: the dictatorships had definitively inserted the economies of Latin America in the financialization of capital, which to an extreme degree sterilized the power of the state in this new and original democratization.

The response of the political forces that took over government power after the dictatorships was to step up the pace to complete the work of financialization, attempting to insert the different countries, under diverse formulas, in a mistaken, supposedly homogenizing globalization. Customs protection was eliminated in the name of the benefits of free trade, the government corporations which had constituted themselves into the pillars of industrialization since the 1950s were privatized, and the labor markets structured into a precarious Welfare State were deregulated in different ways. Some went quite far: through integration into FTA Mexico lost its autonomy for any economic policy; Argentina privatized everything and established a dollarization that ended by eliminating all non-customs protection and reached the limit of setting up the parity between the peso and the dollar as a law, thus denying those who had been elected the capacity to govern. De la Rúa was the paroxysm of this destatization of the currency. Brazil, under the double mandate of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, privatized the powerful government-owned industrial base, retaining only Petrobrás, in a transfer of property that endorsed the structures of power and the relations between classes and between the latter and politics. There still remained a significant private industrial base, undercut, however, by opening up trade indiscriminately. It would be lengthy, tedious and superfluous, in the face of the formidable arsenal of data, analyses and interpretations by ECLAC, to reconstruct the disasters expressed in the main economic indicators.

This fragmentation of class relations is not without consequences for politics, radicalizing social tensions to an unsuspected degree, and a political step of such magnitude is required that the very implosion of class relations advises against waiting. The high levels of unemployment and of informal employment dethroned from a politically central position the categories organized in formal employment to which they had risen: even the election of Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva to the presidency of the Brazilian republic did not entail the waxing of labor power as the political basis of the PT. It has a different meaning. Unemployment and off-the-books employment, which in a country like Brazil reached something like 60% of the economically active population –and in Argentina the percentage is even greater– created a new class that the political lexicon of the left and of the social sciences isn’t even capable of naming: they are not informal workers, they are unemployed but not jobless: they are not a “marginal mass” in the conception of José Nun: they are a *lumpen peasantry*,

without the pejorative nuance that the term undeniably had in the hands of the bearded one of Tiers. It is in politics that they become a *lumpen*; or, better said, it is in anti-politics.

This powerful deconstruction destroys the relations of representation: who is represented today by the parties themselves that arose from the old social bases? Whom does Argentina's Justicialism, by itself already divided into powerful bureaucratic and even gangster-like fractions, represent? The picketers? Ask them themselves. Does the PT represent the sixty percent of the sum of informal workers and unemployed in Brazil? Do the traditional political parties of Colombia represent the forces in conflict for over 30 years, worsened by the arrival of the paramilitaries on the scene? Evo Morales is the new man of the coca growers, and he constitutes real news, because Bolivia's parties had long ceased to have any truly popular insertion, and the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) went over to the oligarchies' side a long time ago. The indigenous movement in Ecuador is also a novelty, in the same sense as the movement in Bolivia. Fujimori was a conservative reaction to anarchy: but the immense digestive system of the plundering dominant classes quickly swallowed him and transformed him into the greatest symbol of the corrupt impunity of the old Peruvian dominant classes. Toledo comes with Stanford in his baggage and already experiences a demoralization that makes his Ph.D. impotent.

Institutional politics spin ineffectually, because the conditions and the constraints imposed by globalization make democratic and republican institutions useless and superfluous. Central Banks are the real national authorities, and they are not democratic institutions. In the Schmittian definition, the sovereign is he who decides the State of Exception. National States have turned into States of Exception: all public policies are policies of exception. And who decides among us?

Institutional policy led the most transformation-minded popular forces into a trap. It is these new popular forces, which finally reached the thresholds of power, which implement the exception: of the surpluses agreed on with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), of the pressure to institute the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), of the submission to the World Trade Organization (WTO), of our conversion to free exchange and free trade.

Latin America has forgotten the fundamental lesson of Raúl Prebisch, about the asymmetry of forces in the center-periphery relationship. Meanwhile, the national bourgeoisies, entirely subordinated

to globalization, renounce politics. They prefer to place their trust in the mechanisms so revealingly pointed out by Foucault: compulsory coercion, procedures, institutionalities, etc. All of them, automatisms that annul politics.

The Brazilian case illustrates this to satiety: Lula's government, which promised to be transformative, surrendered to obligations; there is no political opposition, even opposition by economic sectors, whichever they might be. The paradox thus emerges that the forces that won the elections struggle among themselves, while the dominant classes provoke the conflicts: the case of land reform in Brazil is nothing but that. The Landless Movement (MST) attempts to obtain government compliance with the necessary number of settlements, and the government doesn't carry the land reform out, perhaps not because of a lack of political will but because of the surpluses in fiscal approaches imposed by the IMF, while the media exaggerate the conflict between the MST and the government. Consequently, both are weakened and anti-land reform positions begin to strengthen.

It should also be doubted that the neoliberal period has exhausted its agenda. To provide an example, let us return to the case of the Brazilian government which continues to deepen the neoliberal "reforms." Now, assuming that the neoliberal agenda is really exhausted, the issue that appears is a more complex one: what should be done to repair the deep organizational wearing down of the working classes and minimally restore the regulatory capacity of an entirely pillaged state? How is economic growth to be restarted if the government investment that was decisive in the industrialization of Latin America is impossible because government finances have been strangled by the heavy servicing of the domestic and foreign debt and the privatizations? Trust in the market as a mechanism for the distribution of resources must be cast into doubt even more vigorously than in the golden days of ECLAC, considering that the distribution of income has worsened, and therefore investments only go to the sectors that handle the demands of the high-income classes, perpetuating the perverse concentration already pointed out and condemned by Celso Furtado. Economic growth without a redistribution of income becomes even more concentrating, and without the state as a regulatory force the transformative project has everything needed to be the executioner of its own promise.

What is left in Latin America to the national states that are precluded from acting on development policies is the administration of

the policies of functionalization of poverty. These are policies of exception that transform the states into States of Exception. They are marketing states that invent names such as “bolsa-escola” (school scholarship), “bolsa-alimentação” (food scholarship), “primeiro-emprego” (first job), “começar de novo” (new beginning), “Fome Zero” (Hunger Zero) –the most pretentious of all, which shows up the anti-universal character of these policies with extreme clarity. Meanwhile the social security policies that promoted a greater redistribution of income in the annals of capitalism in the central countries are annulled in the periphery by the privatizations and the “reforms” –the new term for semantic piracy.

As labor forces have been highly eroded, and have lost the ability to propose policies and carry them out, or to veto the anti-reforms, the national states of Latin America are close to what, in the past, the literature called populism. But the name is equivocal; that populism entailed the inclusion along “the passive path,” in an authoritarian manner, of the working classes in politics, while neopopulism –let us accept it for now– implies the exclusion of workers from politics and their transformation into the objects of compensatory policies. May Nun forgive me, but through the policies for the functionalization of poverty the “marginal mass” turns into the maintenance of the “reserve armies” suitable for more primitive work processes, with which to win a functional spot in the accumulation of capital. It isn’t poverty, however, that moves that accumulation, but the molecular-digital revolution at the dynamic center that makes poverty functional for the accumulation of capital. The economies of Latin America now belong to the platypus family, a lopsided combination of high income, conspicuous consumption, accumulation of capital commanded by the molecular-digital revolution, extreme poverty, modern lumpen-peasantry, and subjection by financial capital, technical and scientific ineffectualness. Argentina, which had given us the only Nobel in a scientific field, physiology-biology-medicine, now lies asleep at the Recoleta cemetery: here lies the promise of a nation.

Why is the challenge greater today than that which arose in the years of “developmentalism” (*desarrollismo*), which found its best formulator in the brave ECLAC? Firstly for a fundamental strategic reason: the previous situation –characterized by an “unequal exchange” between producers of raw materials (Latin America) and producers of manufactured goods (the dynamic center)– could be overcome by putting into practice ECLAC’s proposal *par excellence*: industrialization.

Today, globalization is above all a financial system. The principal contradiction doesn't refer to the fact that it is the multinationals themselves who are present in the industrialization that substitutes for imports –which worsens financial dependence because it is one of its structuring elements– but the fact that it is global money (the dollar and the euro) which constitutes the prior assumption and the result of the financing of the economies of the Latin American periphery. In other words, it is international money itself which finances Latin America's productive activity. And there is no “substitutive industrialization” for global money. In this case, the medicine kills. The equation of dependence and that of its solution are more complex.

TO LOVE, THINK AND ACT FROM LATIN AMERICA

ARMANDO HART DÁVALOS*

FOR A CUBAN who tries to be coherent with the history of Cuba and of America it constitutes an immense honor to have been granted the privilege of transmitting a message to the people present here. It also implies a great responsibility because I must do it in the name of the culture represented by José Martí. The Apostle and Simón Bolívar are the topmost symbols of the history of America; they represent a culture that since its conception has been linked to the immediate problems of our historic development and, therefore, can today provide answers and point out possible paths for facing the challenges of the current world.

As President Fidel Castro pointed out at the close of the International Conference for the Balance of the World, held in homage to the 150th anniversary of José Martí's birth, our Apostle identified God with the idea of good. In the name of Martí's acceptance of God, that is, of good, I bring the word born of our deepest convictions that flower from loves and thoughts rooted in our spirit. To love, to think and to act – this is the message of Martí that I would modestly like to expound to you.

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The natural sciences have created symbols for delving into knowledge about a reality that encompasses both the infinite spaces of the Universe and the inexhaustible micro world. Without them we would not have attained the heights of knowledge that man has conquered. Those of a social character also require their own symbols. They are present in the great social, economic, cultural and political processes. Also in the people and in the individuals who represent and promote them.

Myths and symbols are indispensable for establishing relations within human consciousness between levels of reality that present themselves as contradictory and as vastly separate in space and time. In a world burdened by ferocious and vulgar materialism that expresses a very dangerous fragmentation of reality, they are more necessary than ever before in history. They must enable us to find and extract conclusions regarding the invisible thread that –according to Martí– links individuals in history. We will thus be able to understand the drama which originates in the past and to attempt to envision a future that can only be attained with the actions of millions of people and of many generations. Let others reject the need for myths and symbols. People –as Mariátegui said– need multitudinous myths. Martí's apostleship is therefore more current and necessary than ever.

Over a hundred years ago, conservative European thought reached the conclusion that by the end of the twentieth century the decadence of the West would take place. Similarly, the illustrious Cuban patrician Salvador Cisneros Betancourt pointed out at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the path that the United States then trod would lead to the decadence of its immense power and warned, thinking about Cuba, that United States leaders should always remember that there is no small enemy.

Already in 1887, on presciently analyzing the dangers that were shaping up from the United States, our National Hero pointed out: "Like immense and slow phantoms, the vital problems of the Americas are arising in space: the times demand something more than factories of the imagination and the generation of beauty. On all faces and in all countries, as symbols of the era, one can see hesitation and anguish. The entire world is now an immense question mark."

How to answer this question in the twenty-first century when the challenge presents itself in a more dramatic and universal manner?

As this conference itself demonstrates, Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region of the world with the possibility to draw up a consistent thesis in relation to the major challenges that the twenty-first century poses us, and we can do it with the participation of illustrious representatives of the North American people such are present here.

It is in Latin America and the Caribbean where the indispensable cultural reserves are located for facing the grave crisis we have before us. Our Americas can, due to economic and social factors linked to our immense spiritual tradition, present formulas for a dialogue with the world, including the North American people and society themselves, in relation to the future of humanity. For these reasons, I invite you to study Latin American thought and specifically that of Martí, who arrived at a set of universal ideas not only through abstract formulations, but also by pointing out some very concrete things. A genius with words, he said that doing is the best way of saying. He set this out brilliantly in prose and in poetry. He also confirmed it in his actions, ideas and principles that serve to know and understand a reality which one often cannot reach with rational thought.

His scintillating verses delved into substantive aspects of human sensibility and managed to reveal truths and feelings that were hidden in the skein of a rationalism which by virtue of being exaggerated and inconsistent has become irrational and has led us into the most atrocious primitivism, because when intelligence isn't accompanied by love it turns into error; evil and irrationality that nurture the criminal instinct. As I have said, the genius of the Apostle resides in these analyses: love, reason and a vocation for action, this is what he taught us.

Since this synthesis can only be attained on a social and historical scale with a culture inclined toward action, the Apostle took it to the terrain of facts and to his pedagogical ideas and to those on cultivated politics. This leads to an understanding of the possibilities and needs of a philosophical elucidation oriented towards drawing up programs such as are needed by today's world.

Let us issue a reflection on the basis of what the cultured Europe called the New World, that is to say, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, and of the role it should perform in this new century.

In the *Manifiesto of Montecristi* which Martí signed along with General Máximo Gómez in May 1895, by which they explained to Cuba, America and the world the bases for Cuba's drive toward independence, essential ideas were pointed out which are still astonishingly current. For example: "The war of independence of Cuba, locus of the array of islands which, within the span of a few years, the trade of the continents will run through, is an event of great human scope, and a timely service that the judicious heroism of the Antilles offers toward firmness and fair treatment among the nations of the Americas, and toward the world's still vacillating balance."

In a letter to his very close Mexican friend Manuel Mercado dated May 18, 1895, unfinished because death stole up on him the next day, he pointed out that everything he had done and would do

would be to “prevent in time, through the independence of Cuba, having the United States spread through the Antilles, and having it fall even harder with that power on our lands of the Americas.” The Apostle did not forget a substantial aspect; he sent a message to the United States people when, on another occasion, he stated that the Cuban war of independence was also being carried out to save the honor of the great northern republic which would find a more secure greatness in the development of its territory –unfortunately already feudal and split into hostile sections– than in the ignoble conquest of its smaller neighbors and in the war which the aligned world would have to wage against its ambition. It is the vision of Martí that we wish to have reached all the people of the world and especially that of the United States.

As I was listening to the extremely interesting speeches of the first day¹, I asked myself what the reaction of United States society may be in the face of the universal drama that the oligarchy of that country is strongly unleashing. I have faith in the potentialities, in the best democratic tradition of the United States, and trust that sensible people will emerge in that nation’s leadership who will understand that they have no possibility of relating to the world other than on the basis of a crucible of ideas such as those of A. Lincoln, R. W. Emerson –whom José Martí so admired– and Martin Luther King, whose symbol will grow ever greater in the midst of the United States people.

It is very important to take into account that Martí conceived these ideas in the heart of the United States –a land where he resided for more than a third of his life– precisely at the time that the imperialism was taking shape. It was there that he crowned his thinking and turned into the most profound analyst of U.S. reality in the latter half of the nineteenth century. For this reason, his ideas on balance permit a philosophical enlightenment that serves to draw up the political and educational programs that we need today.

There are two key ideas in Martí that help us to locate, on a philosophical foundation, the political, educational and cultural paths along which to face these processes. They are firstly the views on world balance that we have previously referred to, and secondly the usefulness of virtue and the possibilities of human improvement. The idea of a world balance is based, like his entire worldview, on the integrity of the diverse orders of reality as an essential guiding law ruling nature, art, science, economics and social relations. And since this synthesis can only be attained on a social and historical scale when

¹ See the articles by Francisco de Oliveira and Samir Amin in this same volume.

oriented toward action, the Apostle applied it to the spheres of education, culture and practical politics.

On the basis of these conclusions, we issue an invitation to study his ideas regarding what he called the science of the spirit, his standpoints on the relations between evil and stupidity and between goodness and intelligence, his statement that the meaning of humanity resides in the capacity to associate together, his criterion regarding the importance of education and culture in human liberation and his ethical ideas. Martí's statement regarding every individual being a dormant beast should also be studied. "It is necessary to place a leash on the beast. And man is an admirable beast: he has the attribute of carrying his own leash." The leash is culture.

All these aspects constitute essential keys to reaching a conception of the world on the basis of justice and of solidarity among men. This crucible of ideas analyzed in relation to the best universal philosophical thinking makes manifest a measure of science and utopianism, of reality and dream such as is required to attain a better world.

This is because in Martí there took place a synthesis of the immense knowledge of European modernity; the purest ethical tradition with Christian roots, which from the outset didn't place itself in Cuba in an antagonism with science; the unbiased influence of Masonic ideas in their most universal sense and in their sense of human solidarity; the Bolivarian and Latin American tradition that he enriched with his life in Mexico, Central America and Venezuela, and the anti-imperialist ideas and sentiments arising from the very innards of the U.S. empire where he lived more than fifteen years, and where he rounded out his political, social and philosophical thinking from the viewpoint of Latin America's interests. He was undoubtedly the most profound analyst of United States reality in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In 1892, José Martí founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party and three years later, after intense political and organizational labors, he issued a call to the necessary war against the Spanish empire that turned out to be the prelude to combat against the incipient U.S. Empire. In the 1920s this patriotic and anti-imperialist tradition blended with the socialist ideal and deepened its popular content and its content of social justice.

In this way, Cuban culture reached the new millennium with the highest synthesis between European thinking and that of the New World, and in so doing took on the articulation between Europe and the Americas on the basis of half a century of practical experience in the confrontation with the imperialist policy and therefore with the greatest technological and economic power that has ever

existed in humanity and which is, additionally, located 90 miles from our shores.

A nation that has had this capacity for combat and for resistance to face such grievous obstacles for around a hundred and fifty years has the ability to provide answers to the essential problems facing the Cuba of today and of tomorrow but which –let it be clearly known– affect not only our country, but involve all mankind.

If in the twentieth century anti-imperialist thinking and its radical universal humanism were exalted, in the twenty-first it is necessary to study the philosophical ideas of Martí that are indispensable not only for our country but for America and for humanity as a whole. There is no alternative to posing problems of a philosophical character, leaving behind terminologies of European making that set up a barrier against the masses, and taking up the thinking of the greatest philosophers of all times again.

Antonio Gramsci stated that every great philosophy starts out with a critical analysis of the formulations of common sense. Let us consider the first: every person needs to eat, clothe himself, and have a roof, before engaging in philosophy, religion and culture. From it, let us derive the second: there is no man, in the universal sense that we all know, without culture.

What teaching do we Cubans extract today from these ideas and their ulterior consequences? The first and most important lesson resides in that the main deficit of what was called the left in the century that has concluded was to have divorced social and class struggles from the best Latin American cultural tradition. This did not occur that way in Cuba. Among us, as I have already pointed out, the political, economic, social and cultural ideas arising from two major sources were articulated in the twentieth century: the historical materialism of Marx and Engels, which is the highest stage reached to date by European philosophy, and the culture on Latin American and Caribbean foundations whose highest stage exists in José Martí.

At a universal level, in the twentieth century it proved impossible to relate the great discoveries of historical materialism to the weight of subjectivity in history itself. For this purpose there lacked culture.

This incites us in the twenty-first century to study, in the light of the human sciences and their great discoveries, the importance of the subjective factor in understanding the events we have before us.

Hence the value of Fidel Castro's words when he insists that culture is the essential element for national and international politics at these crossroads times.

The material foundations of civilization require culture, as a need; without it they would lack the immense accumulated wealth, without it there wouldn't really be a highly developed economy.

When the noble aspirations of liberty, equality and fraternity have been tossed overboard by the vulgar materialism that has been imposed in the world that is called unipolar, we Latin Americans and Caribbeans present ourselves with a universal cultural richness of the highest humanistic value. It is difficult to find another region of the world that by virtue of its history and traditions possesses the vocation of solidary universality of Latin America. Among us the narrow and fanatic nationalisms that are painfully present in other regions don't exist. Latin American and Caribbean nationalism includes the ideal of multinational integration and a generous disposition to embrace the world.

We set out from a tradition of spirituality and ethicality that is manifested in the search for a better tomorrow for the world. It is present, in an unmistakable manner, in the major movements of ideas that have taken place over the last fifty years in our broadly-defined fatherland. They are: the renewal in socialist thinking that was generated by the Cuban Revolution and that we represent in Fidel Castro and Ernesto Guevara; the artistic and literary explosion, and the esthetic thinking related to, and having its bulwark in, Alejo Carpentier and the marvelous real; the social and philosophical thinking and the ethical dimension that we notice in the theology of liberation when we analyze it as a function of the kingdom of this world; the popular-education movement.

These idea processes have a common denominator: they take reality very much into account and, likewise, pose themselves a utopian vision, i.e., a project, an aspiration, an ideal of human improvement toward the future. The crisis in Western thought resides, precisely, as we have already pointed out, in that it divorced these two categories: utopianism and science. Latin America can, on the basis of its history and traditions, present a solution that twins intelligence and love as a liberation project.

Selfishness doesn't need to be encouraged; it exists with a spontaneous force that is often overwhelming and destructive. Love and solidarity are the higher features of human intelligence that require stimulation. An endeavor aimed at promoting ideas and feelings of solidarity lies at the essence of the postulate of José Martí that is required for the social and historical balance of individuals, communities, nations and humanity as a whole.

The social agents of change posed by Marx and Engels turn out to be insufficient. They were presented for the Europe of the nine-

teenth century and we are in the western hemisphere of the twenty-first century.

It is essential to find new categories to conceive the way of changing the world.

The drive toward transformation must be materialized from the starting point of the fully objective fact that current events are related to material and spiritual needs derived from the identity of communities, nations and groups of nations given the geographical area, given their aspiration toward a higher civilization, and given the existence of the universality which is today called globalization. Let us study postmodern challenges on the basis of these three categories: identity, civilization and universality. These have economic roots, and the vortex of the postmodern cyclone passes through them. This is the new dimension that has been reached by the social, historical and cultural drama in the years following the fall of the Berlin wall. At the end of the Second World War these confrontations were already discerned and unfolding, but the existence of a bipolar balance contained, or at least mitigated, a radical rupture of such conflictive relations.

Latin America and the Caribbean are in a condition to offer, in answer to the evident fragmentation and decadence of Western thought, the solidity of our cultural tradition and its utopian value directed toward the aim of integration.

In practical terms, what does this aspiration toward universality compel us to?

In the first place, we must not fall into the trap of analyzing our relations with the United States by focusing on the political issue exclusively within the framework of the interests and criteria that are handled in the midst of that country's government elite. It must be done from a wider perspective; it must be adjusted and must take into consideration the possible influence to be exerted on the public opinion and people of the United States. It is necessary, at the same time, to effect an international mobilization of the widest social sectors in favor of the aims we pursue.

Secondly, we mustn't have the slightest weakness or slackness in the face of the arrogant policy of United States governments. As the Che pointed out, we cannot make the slightest concession to the imperialists. This formulation has today greater reasons for being applicable than when Ernesto Guevara issued it.

In the third place, it is necessary to ensure the unity of the people, division being one of the factors that most weakens the people's capacity to struggle, to advance and to resist; for these reasons, we Cubans look after unity as after the apple of our eyes.

Fourthly, unity and firmness in the face of hegemonic and unipolar power demand the defense of the interests of the immense majority of the population, and respect for the tradition of our peoples, which is expressed in their culture; within it, the role performed by intellectuals is of enormous importance.

All this leads us to exalt the role of the pedagogical practice and practical politics that constitute the most singular constriction made by the Apostle to the history of political and educational ideas. They are also linked to the immense juridical culture that has an ample tradition in our people. In this manner, pedagogy, politics and the law must be articulated to form a powerful front of ethical concepts and principles, which is an essential subject of the politics of our times.

Governability is talked about. It is, however, impossible without the law and without ethics. In the current world, for it to be possible, justice must be recognized in its most widely encompassing and universal sense. Say "man" and all rights have been said, stated the Apostle. He also declared: "Let the world be grafted onto our republics; but the trunk must be that of our republics." And for this to happen and have the ability to promote stability in the present and toward the future, it is necessary to have ethics and law guaranteeing universal justice. For such elevated proposals what is indispensable is a democracy with full popular participation and with the incorporation of all social sectors without discrimination of any kind. This requires new forms of government very different from those of the past.

A thinking that may serve as the trunk for our ideas must not be sought outside our fatherlands; it must be sought in the history of our countries. On the basis of what is ours, we can find in that history that which is essentially Latin American as a creative force to face the challenge that today's world finds before it. With regard to this principle, José Martí averred, "The incompetence does not reside in the incipient country, which requires forms suited to it and useful greatness, but in those who want to rule original countries, with a singular and violent composition. With laws inherited from four centuries of free practice in the United States, from nineteen centuries of monarchy in France. With a decree by Hamilton one cannot halt the charge of the plainsman's horse. With a phrase by Sieyès one cannot end the stagnation of the clotted blood of the Indian race (...). The government must be born from the country. The spirit of the government must be that of the country. The form of government must be suited to the way the country itself is constituted. The government is nothing else than the balance of the natural elements of the country."

For all this, political action is necessary, and, in turn, it is indispensable to delve deeply into the best political ideas. I have main-

tained that the singularity of the politics of José Martí, and of his disciple Fidel Castro, resides in having overcome the old watchword, with its reactionary tradition, of “divide and conquer,” to establish the principle of “unite to win.”

However many analyses we carry out in the infinite maze of economic facts and figures, the path to a solution to these problems can only arrive from political ideas and watchwords. This is the only way of breaking with the horrendous vicious circle into which politics fell in the twentieth century, and it is what will lead us to practice.

Since the late 1940s and early 1950s our country's most progressive forces exalted the watchwords of political freedom, economic independence, social justice, and combat against corruption and immorality.

The first three were the reflection of the social and economic struggles that our country undertook for its liberation. The fourth expresses the need to fight corruption and the violation of ethical and juridical principles. This latter is a key issue for any revolutionary.

Those in the Americas who aspire to the liberation of their people must begin by condemning the violations of the law and the immorality, the vices, the larceny and the thievery of traditional politicians. Cuba's road to socialism started out that way. It is a reflection that I consider perfectly valid, in the current circumstances, for any process of change that is carried out among our people of the Americas.

Let us definitively overcome divisive “isms”; let us seek out, with elective methods, as was propounded by the Cuban philosophy of the beginning of the nineteenth century, the path of the truth, and through this selection we shall find the social and philosophical thinking that the Americas require. We shall never find it with Byzantine debates about the diversity of philosophical and political systems that came to us from outside, whichever they are, from what was called the left or from what was called the right.

Enough of talking about culture without grasping that its primary value is justice. It is necessary to be well-educated, but one must aspire to culture in its widest sense; justice must be exalted to the highest level, suitable for defending the interests of all people, be they New Yorkers, Afghans, Iraqis, Cubans, Argentines, French, Chinese or Vietnamese. In one word, all, without exception. To sum it up I will quote two ideas of President Fidel Castro that may illustrate what we are stating: “Great crises lead to great solutions.” And this other one: “The great asset of the human mind for the future consists in the enormous potential of genetically received intelligence that we are incapable of utilizing. This is what we have at our disposal, there resides the future (...).”

In order to find that formula let us, as the Apostle did, relate goodness to the intelligence and happiness of each individual, on one hand, and evil to stupidity and the unhappiness of the other. This can be studied on an individual scale and also at a social level. The modern advances in psychology confirm this thesis of Martí's that the feelings, the emotions and the intellectual capacity of the individual are in a very direct relationship and are those which allow individual balance within each person in particular; and it also finds its confirmation in descriptions made in the physiological field of the operation of the human mind. This, of course, is valid at a social and historical level; it can be verified through the detailed examination of universal history.

Political and social systems perish not only through evil, but also because they are guided wrong-headedly; this is demonstrated through the history of Cuba by its relation with Spanish colonialism first and later with U.S. neocolonialism. It is a historical truth that must be taken very seriously into account when the twilight of the system of capitalist domination, loaded with perils for humanity, is taking place. But as Fidel Castro has said, this is a period that additionally offers possibilities for generating wealth and greater happiness for all people.

Yes, we are in a period following the modern era, that is to say, it is postmodern, characterized by the greatest and most profound crisis in the institutions and political, legal, ethical and cultural values of so-called Western civilization. Those that retain their formal validity are already impotent for facing the drama of humanity in the recently begun century; for this reason, it becomes necessary to create a space for the study, research and promotion of ideas about the need for balance in the world, one that is led by a dialogue removed or distant from the enormous limitations imposed by the world's immediate conflicts of a practical nature.

To this end, the International Conference for the Balance of the World agreed to organize the José Martí Project of World Solidarity aimed at the creation, on an international scale, of a space for reflection, study, research and the promotion of ideas on the need for balance in the world oriented toward serene dialogue, removed from the enormous limitations imposed by the conflicts of an immediate political character of the current world. We aspire to promote the widest possible representation of civilizations and people of the world, of the international organizations most vitally interested in these goals, and –on the basis of the universal consensus expressed in the creation of the United Nations after the World War– to support the updating of the multilateral ideals that will guarantee the right of nations, people, cultural identities and human beings to peace, culture and economic

and social development. We call on all those present to offer their backing to this initiative that already enjoys the endorsement of UNESCO.

We are the inheritors of a beautiful intellectual tradition that allows us, today more than ever, to think with our own head and –as Martí indicated– to make the forms of government emerge from the country itself.

We stand at a crucial moment in the history of the world and of our Americas. The new factor that presents itself is that while so-called Western civilization finds itself at a pessimistic and right-wing crossroads, our Americas today contain the –at least initial– seeds of a world of hope.

When Martí was told that the proper atmosphere was lacking for the war of independence, he replied that he wasn't speaking of atmosphere but of subsoil. In Latin America there is a world of hope that additionally is already emerging toward the surface in the entire hemisphere. Compare the political situation of the current world with the fact that there exist five Latin American states where major changes are gestating –I refer to Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Paraguay and Bolivia. The recent events in Bolivia confirm the bankruptcy of neoliberal policy and the fact that the masses are becoming conscious of the real causes of the problems that burden our countries. Let us not forget this because, emerging from the subsoil of the Americas, is the greatest hope of the world of today. I am not being triumphalist; I know the difficulties well and I also know that the changeover is very difficult, but the seeds have been sown, the beginnings are there; let us make use of them and search, employing every means, for the way to give an ideology, philosophy, theory to the new process that is taking shape and that appears, strongly, in the idea of the Social Forums of São Paulo: another, better world is possible. Latin America is in the vanguard for finding that better world.

Let us fulfill the commitment we have as the small human genus.

Martí said in relation to the Cubans who refused to fight for independence that it seemed unbelievable that with such a glorious future ahead there were people born in our land who would bind their lives to Spain's rustic and rotten monarchy. Paraphrasing these ideas of the Apostle's, we can say that it is incredible that there are Latin Americans who, in the twenty-first century, reject the determination to help the world with the ideas of our national heroes and thinkers and bind their lives to decadent and corrupt imperialism.

Let us unite our intelligence and our hearts to say to our people and to all of humanity: a better world is possible. It is the moral republic of the Americas, the formula of triumphant love that Martí prophesied.

HEGEMONY AND IMPERIALISM IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM*

ATILIO A. BORON**

The subject that convene us

THE MAIN GOAL of this conference was to examine the *problématique* of the new worldwide hegemony, the options for change and social movements. Without fear of exaggeration we might say that in their complex articulation these matters identify the fundamental challenges faced today by the men and women of our time who want to build a better world. Another world –as demanded along the length and breadth of our planet in recent years on the basis of a clear realization that the current world is unbearable because of its injustice and predatory nature. This world is the result of capitalist civilization, which like the monster in the most dreadful allegories devours its offspring, exhausts its non-renewable resources and irreparably destroys the environment that our species requires for survival. William

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Shakespeare's reflection, when he makes one of his characters say, "You take my life when you do take the means whereby I live," seems highly fitting. The predatory nature of capitalism, exacerbated in its current phase, has led precisely to this point: depriving three quarters of humanity of their livelihood and destroying the environment that made it possible for human life to appear and maintain itself on this planet. A civilization which in the name of efficiency, rationality and progress slowly and silently carries out the biggest genocide known in the history of humanity. Every year near forty million people, most of them children, die of hunger and curable diseases. In other words, in just one year capitalism annihilates more than half the number of victims caused by the Second World War over six years. The large social movements that today challenge this situation do so on the basis of the conviction that other world is not only possible but also necessary and urgent. I shall attempt, in the following pages, to set forth a brief summary of the debates held within the framework of this event. The emphasis will be placed both on the main areas of agreement and on the issues under dispute.

A new phase?

There is an extremely wide consensus in the sense that the world imperialist system has entered a new phase in its evolution. This transition didn't escape the notice of its spokespeople and ideological representatives, who hurried to endow this new stage with a name that underlined the dazzling features of its appearance while carefully hiding its deepest essence: globalization. The more striking aspects of this process seem to substantiate the idea of an increasing globalization of productive processes and of the operation of the diverse markets. Nevertheless, the scope of this phenomenon has been extraordinarily exaggerated and nowadays the available research already demonstrates that the much trumpeted globalization –which the French correctly call *mondialization*, something like "worldization," to allude to the will-related, not at all natural, elements that boost it– is a phenomenon that acquires a different solidity depending on what is being talked about. The international financial system has, no doubt, been

¹ We have examined this subject in *Tiempos violentos. Neoliberalismo, globalización y desigualdad en América Latina*, 2004 (1999), which includes a detailed bibliography on the issue.

globalized; but the same has not happened with trade in agricultural products and with a broad swath of the service sector¹.

The champions of neoliberalism were not tardy in announcing that the advent of globalization brought to an end “the age of imperialism”. This was now duly acknowledged while before its sole existence had been stubbornly denied, attributed to the feverish imagination of critics on the left, always ready to give vent to their visceral hate against the system with all types of charges and challenges. According to the right, the imperialist experience, already ended, was explained by a series of factors allegedly foreign to capitalism. Standing out among them were militarism, nationalism and protectionism. Exhibiting a colossal disregard for the lessons of history they isolated these factors from the reality of capitalist development, as if it hadn’t been precisely the latter which engendered them, and re-edited the dusty thesis of “sweet commerce” proposed, as Albert Hirschman rightly observed, by the first ideologists of bourgeois society over the course of eighteenth century. A thesis which, in essence, held that the development of trade calms spirits and curbs people’s “bellicose instincts.” If they trade, they said, there will be no wars. And despite the thorough refutation provided by history (and by the present) this thesis reappears in our time in the writings of globalization theorists.

The accelerated and profound changes experienced as of the closing decades of the last century left popular movements, and the left itself, deeply disconcerted. If the organic intellectuals of the right hastened to salute the novelties as a radical break with the opprobrious imperialist past, in the leftist camp confusion reached unthought-of levels when some of its most respected theorists stated, in agreement with their alleged adversaries, that global neoliberalism expressed the historical overcoming of imperialism, and that we were in front of a new reality of international politics and economics that could be given the name of “empire.” An empire, naturally, without imperialist relations of domination. An empire without imperialism, acknowledged in a play on words whose most important effect was to produce the ideological disarmament of contesting social forces. Since we have examined those theses –maintained fundamentally but not

2 Hardt’s and Negri’s theses have been subjected to extremely tough criticism from the moment they were rendered in *Empire* (2000). Daniel Bensaid, Alex Callinicos, Néstor Kohan, Ellen Meiksins Wood, Leo Panitch and the author of this article have discussed this work in detail from diverse perspectives.

exclusively by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri—*in extenso* elsewhere, we shall not attempt to refute them once again in this paper².

Nevertheless, what is being ratified for a long time now and has emerged quite clearly from the discussions of this Conference is that globalization could be better characterized not as the overcoming of imperialism but as a new phase within the imperialist stage of capitalism. Maybe we should ask ourselves whether it isn't a new "higher phase," to employ Lenin's celebrated expression, which poses serious problems of interpretation when it comes to identifying its fundamental features. In the discourse of neoliberalism, globalization is none other than the ratification of the inexorable "naturalness" of capitalism, exalted as a kind of "natural order of the universe," and the final stage of the historical movement finally imposed on the entire surface of the terrestrial globe and which expresses the selfish and acquisitive nature of the human species. As Franz Hinkelammert has pointed out in several of his writings, the corollary of this reasoning is the dehumanization of those who oppose the world dominance of capital. And in the same way that the native peoples of the Americas were massacred without remorse because, after all, their very condition as human beings had been denied to them because only beasts could be opposed to the advance of "civilization," the current victims and the opponents of capitalism will suffer the same fate. They too constitute a surplus population, unexploitable and superfluous, which does not deserve any respect and for whom human rights constitute a merciful fabrication. Genocide continues its march undaunted (Hinkelammert, 2002).

Things being this way, for the ideologists of neoliberalism globalization has unequivocal epistemological and political implications. With regard to the former, the primacy of the *pensamiento único* ("the single dominant thought"), constructed on the premises of neoclassical economics, the only one capable of deciphering the meaning and defining features of the new society. With regard to the latter, the enshrining of the Washington Consensus paradigm as the only possible economic policy, to which all others must be subordinated. As Margaret Thatcher put it, "there is no alternative." It is for this reason that social or political *problématiques* are posed as merely technical matters, independent of any ideological position. It is unnecessary to stop to refute this worldview constructed by the ideological apparatuses of capital. Let us say, simply, that this entire argumentation does not resist the evidence provided by history and by the contemporary situation.

The interpretation that emerges from the discussions held in this Conference shows that, far from diluting imperialism in a kind of benevolent empire, an empire that is innocuous and harmless, globalization has, on the contrary, produced a radical accentuation of the traditional features of imperialism, extraordinarily strengthening its genocidal and predatory nature.

The limits of classical theorization of imperialism

The foundations of the above-mentioned confusion are symptomatic of the shortcomings of the traditional theorization of imperialism in front of the transformations experienced by the capitalist mode of production over the course of the twentieth century. As was recalled at the time by the Indian Marxist Prabhat Patnaik in his brief essay which appeared in the *Monthly Review* at the beginning of the 1990s, the term “imperialist” had virtually disappeared from the media, literature and discourses of socialists and communists alike. (Patnaik, 1990) The same happened with the word “dependence,” paradoxically in a period in which dependence reached humiliating extremes in our countries. Whoever pronounced those words was quickly catalogued as an incurable nostalgic or a fanatic that stubbornly close his eyes to the evident transformations that had occurred in recent years. No “well-thinking” intellectual, politician or leader could incur in such an aberration within neoliberal capitalism without turning into the laughing-stock of the global village³. In any case, and setting this issue aside, the truth is that the vanishing of the *problématique* of imperialism and its disappearance from horizon of visibility of peoples was a symptom of two things. On one hand, of the irresistible ascent of neoliberalism as the ideology of capitalist globalization in the last two decades of the last century; on the other, a symptom of the notable transformations that occurred from the end of the Second World War on, which questioned some of the very premises of the classical theories of imperialism formulated in the first two decades of the century by Hobson, Hilferding, Lenin, Bukharin and Rosa Luxemburg, to mention only the main figures. Let us look at this latter in greater detail.

3 Regarding the ravages wrought by “well thinking” in our time, and especially among left-wing movements, consult the magnificent essay by the Spanish writer and playwright Alfonso Sastre (2003).

(a) To begin with, let us say that a decisive aspect of these theories was the tight association existing between imperialism and crisis of capitalism in the metropolitan economies. The former was seen, essentially, as the mechanism by which mature capitalism transitorily resolved the crises generated by the increase in the organic composition of capital and the decreasing trend of the profit rate. The period that began after the end of the Second World War plunged this relation flagrantly into crisis. Indeed, the “golden age” that unfolded between 1948 and the mid-1970s was the most successful boom period in the history of capitalism. At no other time had a cycle of prosperity persisted over the course of almost three decades, with rates of economic growth that were so high and that reached almost all capitalist economies. But, contradicting the postulates of classical theorization, that period was at the same time one of the most aggressive ones from the standpoint of imperialist, especially U.S., expansion, over the entire face of the earth. The classical connection between capitalist crisis and imperialist expansion was thus broken, triggering the perplexity of those who still clung to the classical formulations of imperialism. Capitalism was booming and imperialism was extending ever more strongly. The theory required an urgent revision (Panitch & Gindin, 2003: 30-31).

(b) Another verification that came to worsen the theoretical confusion in the ranks of the left was the following: in classical formulations the race for the appropriation of colonies and the carving up of the world had an inescapable colophon in inter-imperialist war. Economic rivalry sooner or later translated into military rivalry and armed conflict. There was the precedent supplied by the two great world wars that shook the first half of the twentieth century to provide an irrefutable proof of the truth of that assertion. The novelty contributed by the capitalist reconstruction of the second post-war period was that the exacerbated economic competition among the metropolitan countries has never been translated in the last fifty years into an armed encounter among them. To Kautsky goes the merit of having been the first in glimpsing these new realities, which does not preclude the fact that his thesis of “ultra-imperialism” suffers from serious defects. One of them, perhaps the main one, is his having concluded that the coalition among the imperialist monopolies of the great powers would inaugurate an era of peace. If the ideological mentor of the Second International was able to accurately discern this trend toward inter-

imperialist convergence, his strong Eurocentrism prevented him from foreseeing that the latter would not bring about a Kantian “perpetual peace.” War was to continue, except that it would now take place in Third World settings and would take place against their peoples. In any case, and to summarize, this new situation posed a serious challenge to the conventional wisdom of classical theories of imperialism, steeping the left into a paralyzing perplexity.

(c) Lastly, another issue that threw classical theorizations about imperialism into crisis was, in the current phase of accelerated *mondialization* of capitalist accumulation, the unprecedented expansion of capitalism across the length and breadth of the planet. While, as Marx and Engels noted in the *Communist Manifesto*, capitalism has always been a social regime of production characterized by expansionary tendencies, both in physical and in social geography, the classical theorizations of imperialism rested on an assumption that in our times is unsustainable: the existence of vast peripheral regions (or “agrarian” regions, as was the customary expression at that time) in which capitalism was virtually unknown. As Ellen Meiksins Wood accurately points out, classical theories of imperialism “assume, by definition, the existence of a ‘non capitalist environment’ as a condition for its very existence”. (2003: 127) In other words, metropolitan capitalism required the presence of an agrarian, primitive, peripheral pre-capitalist world to provide it with the necessary oxygen to survive the harsh conditions imposed by the crisis in the metropolises. Hence the violent struggle to carve up the world and the interminable colonial annexation wars. Nevertheless, our time is the witness of an accelerated *mondialization* of capitalism, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the implosion of the former Soviet Union and, almost simultaneously, the opening of China to market forces, all of which presupposes the constitution of a worldwide space –we might say a global one– in which the predominance of capitalism is unarguable. Despite the virtual subsuming of the former “agrarian regions” to the logic of capital, imperialism continues its march and, albeit with many problems, survives its own crises. As Perry Anderson accurately pointed out, when it appeared that in the 1970s and early 1980s it was facing its most serious crisis since the times of the Great Depression, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the opening of China blew fresh air on capitalist reproduction (Anderson, 2003).

Responses to the new challenges

Now then, the transcendence of these changes –which are certainly not the only ones, although they are the most important ones– has given rise to three different attitudes. On one hand, there are those on the dogmatic left who refuse to recognize the reality and importance of these changes, arguing that they are only superficial transformations lacking in significance. Nothing important has changed and therefore nothing needs to be changed or revised in classical theory. “Essentialism” hinders the construction of policies because it is unable to establish differences: Scandinavian capitalism is the same thing as the capitalist governments of Latin America. As capitalism continues to be capitalist, imperialism is the same. Its changes are merely superficial. The theory remains unscathed and there is nothing to modify, because nothing has changed.

There are, next, those who on the basis of the recognition of such changes turn to backing theses located on the antipodes of those they had traditionally favored. In some cases, as in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, to recognize –implicitly and with embarrassment– the final victory of capitalism and to seek consolation in a proposal of “democratic radicalization” which, both in fact and in theory, limits itself to softening the most irritating aspects of bourgeois dominance without proposing its abolition. As regards the subject that we are dealing with, those who adopt this defeatist attitude announce “the end of the imperialist era” and the advent of a new form of international organization, “the empire,” which is supposed to have freed itself from its predecessor’s defects. The *locus classicus* of this position is, of course, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s book, *Empire* (2000), to which we have referred above (Boron, 2002).

There are, lastly, those of us who, recognizing the enormous importance of the changes alluded to, insist that imperialism hasn’t transformed itself into its opposite, nor has it been diluted into a vaporous “international system” or into the vagueness of a new “global system of domination.” It has been transformed, but continues to be imperialist. In the same way that years do not convert the young Adam Smith into the old Karl Marx, nor does the identity of an individual vanish by the mere passing of time, the mutations experienced by imperialism haven’t even remotely led to the construction of a

4 In this section we base ourselves extensively on our *Empire & Imperialism* (Forthcoming).

non-imperialist international economy⁴. It is undeniable that a fundamental continuity exists between the supposedly “new” global logic of the empire –its fundamental actors, its institutions, norms, rules and procedures– and that which existed in the presumably extinct phase of imperialism. Beyond certain modifications in its morphology, the strategic actors of both periods are the same: the large monopolies of transnational reach and with a national base and the governments of the metropolitan countries; the institutions that marshal international economic and political flows continue to be those that put their ominous seal on the imperialist phase that some already consider concluded, like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and others of their ilk; and the rules of the game of the international system are those that are dictated principally by the United States and global neoliberalism, imposed by coercion at the height of the neoconservative counter-revolution in the 1980s and early 1990s through a combination of pressures, loans’ “conditionalities” and manipulations of every kind. Through their design, purpose and functions these rules of the game do nothing but reproduce and perpetuate the old imperialist structure in which, as it would say in *The Leopard*, “If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.” Paraphrasing Lenin we might say that the empire imagined by Hardt and Negri, or by the theoreticians of globalization, is the “higher phase” of imperialism and nothing more. Its operating logic is the same, and so are the ideology that justifies its existence, the actors that energize it and the unfair results that reveal the dogged persistence of the relations of oppression and exploitation.

But as we said earlier, such a dynamic form of production as capitalism –“which incessantly revolutionizes itself,” as Marx and Engels remind us in the *Communist Manifesto*– and such a flexible historical product as that of imperialism (its structure, the logic of its operation, its consequences and its contradictions) cannot be fully understood via a Talmudic rereading of the classical texts. It is obvious that today’s imperialism isn’t the same as before. The “gunboat diplomacy” of Theodore Roosevelt is today substituted by a much more lethal weapon: the army of economists and “experts” of the IMF, the WB and the WTO. Foreign indebtedness and the conditions set by the multilateral banks controlled by imperialism are much more efficient instruments of domination than those employed in the past. Occupation armies are necessary in very specific circumstance –as in

Iraq, for example— but the routine of imperialist oppression can do without them on a day-by-day basis. Docile governments, media controlled by the monopolies and converted into mere propaganda factories, demobilized and demoralized civil societies, and corrupt politicians are much more useful than Marine platoons or Apache helicopters. If, in the past, coups d'état and military dictatorships were required to impose imperialist policies, in today's Latin America this job is performed by "democratic" governments arising from the popular vote and that have made a cult of betrayal and mendacity. Lastly, except for very specific situations like Iraq and Afghanistan, territorial occupation has become redundant since, by means of trade opening, privatizations and deregulation, the economies subjected to imperialism are today more dependent than ever without the need to fire a single shot or deploy a single soldier.

That is why we said that imperialism has changed, and in some aspects the change has been very significant. But it can never be overstressed that, despite everything, it has not been transformed into its opposite, as is suggested to us by neoliberal mystification, turning into a "global" economy in which all nations are "interdependent." It continues to exist and to oppress peoples and nations, and to sow pain, destruction and death in its wake. Despite the changes it preserves its identity and structure, and continues to perform its historical role in the logic of the global accumulation of capital. Its mutations, its volatile and dangerous mixture of persistence and innovation, require the construction of a new approach that will allow us to grasp its current nature. This isn't the place to proceed to an examination of the diverse theories on imperialism. Let us say, by way of summary, that beyond the transformations indicated above, its fundamental attributes pointed out by the classical authors at the time of the First World War continue to be current by virtue of the fact that imperialism is not an accessory feature or a policy pursued by some states but a new stage in the development of capitalism. This stage is marked, today with greater forcefulness than in the past, by the concentration of capital, the overwhelming predominance of the monopolies, the heightened role of financial capital, the export of capital and the carving up of the world into different "spheres of influence." The acceleration of the process of *mondialization* that took place in the last quarter of a century, far from mitigating or dissolving the imperialist structures of the world economy, did nothing but extraordinarily strengthen the structural asymmetries that define the insertion of different countries

in it. While a handful of nations within developed capitalism reinforced their capacity to, at least in part, control productive processes on a worldwide scale, the financialization of the international economy and the increasing circulation of goods and services, the enormous majority of countries saw their foreign dependence deepen and the gap that separates them from the metropolises widen to scandalous levels. Globalization, in sum, consolidated imperialist domination and deepened the subjection of peripheral capitalisms, ever more incapable to exercising a minimal control over their domestic economic processes. This continuity of the fundamental parameters of imperialism can ill be disguised by a change of name, calling what previously was imperialism “empire.”

Characterization of the new phase: lonely superpower or imperial triad?

Now then, how should this new phase of imperialism be characterized? Let us recall what has been suggested in some of the papers that have been presented at this same podium and very especially the contributions of Samir Amin, Noam Chomsky and Perry Anderson collected in this book. In the first place, what becomes clear is that a very pronounced centralization has taken place in the worldwide structure of imperialism, the center of gravity of which has shifted markedly toward the United States. This is a conclusion which, as is known, is very controversial. From this same rostrum Samir Amin posed the thesis of a “collective imperialism,” the idea of an imperial triad. This thesis is not unaware of the already mentioned trend but, to our understanding, strongly diminishes the centrality exercised by the U.S. in sustaining and reproducing the imperialist system at a worldwide level. In any case it is convenient to point out that this is one of the major subjects of debate; a debate which, of course, has not yet been settled. What seems to us is that on the basis of what has been discussed here the imperial triad –the United States, Japan and the European Union– is only apparently such. Stated differently: it is a triad in some aspects but not in others. Which might be the aspects in which this triad is diluted and gives pride of place to the “lonely super-

5 Of Ana Esther Ceceña we recommend her compilation along with Emir Sader (2002).

power”? Which are those in which imperialist domination is constituted as a collective undertaking?

It seems irrefutably evident that at the military level the triad does not exist. At the most recent presentation of the panel on “War and Trade in the Empire,” the Cuban economist Orlando Martínez and the Mexican professor at UNAM Ana Esther Ceceña presented overwhelming data relating to the extraordinary centralization of military power in the hands of the United States, unprecedented in history⁵. Thus, talking about a triad in this sphere makes little sense. From the military standpoint, the European Union and Japan are merely small satellites of the United States, which are in no condition to act autonomously of the directives emanating from Washington. The European Union has been unable, for decades, to raise the flag first hauled up by Charles de Gaulle in pursuit of a common defense policy. Its economicist meanness is revealed by the distance between the ardor with which the leaders in Brussels defend their common agricultural policy from the indecorous pusillanimity with which they broach issues relative to common European defense.

The United States is currently responsible for half the world's expenditure on armament, and maintains bases and military training missions in one hundred and twenty-one countries on the planet, something absolutely unheard-of in the history of mankind. That country has, without any doubt, turned into that “lonely sheriff” who was talked about in a very important article, written some years ago already by one of the greatest theorists of the U.S. right: Professor Samuel Huntington. In the military terrain there is no such triad, nor is there a collective imperialism. The only thing there is is the almost all-pervading power of the United States and a discourse of world domination by force that, as Noam Chomsky recalled in his speech, has only one precedent in the twentieth century: Adolf Hitler.

The already mentioned centralizing trend is also perceivable, albeit in a more attenuated form, in the economic arena. The available data speak of a high concentration of wealth, technology and markets to the benefit of the large transnational corporations of the United States. Transnational, it is necessary to point out, because of the scope of their operations but not because of the nature of their ownership system: they are U.S. corporations, just as there are other companies that are French, German or Japanese but have a global scope. According to a study produced by the *Financial Times* a little over a year ago, 48% of the five hundred largest transnational corporations have their head-

quarters and are rooted in the United States. And if instead of focusing attention on the five hundred biggest we direct our glance at the super-elite constituted by the world's fifty largest corporations, 70%, i.e. 35 companies, are of U.S. origin. And this is repeated when one looks at the proportion constituted by U.S. corporations in different branches of industrial production, or of services. In the computer field, of the world's ten largest computer companies, seven are from the U.S. And if we speak of the production of software, of the top ten, nine are from that country; and in the pharmaceutical industry six of the ten biggest ones are from the United States. In other words: imperialism evidently has a center of gravity that is located in U.S. territory.

This is another feature that has been accentuated in the current phase: the first was the military question; the second, which we have just seen, that of economic concentration. There is a third, which is the increasing tyranny of financial markets, whose dynamism and implacable voracity are to a great extent responsible for the recessionary trends that prevail in the world economy. Ninety-five percent of all the capital that circulates daily in the international financial system, equivalent to a figure higher than the combined gross product of Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, is purely speculative. They are movements of capital deposited for a term not higher than seven days; that is to say, a period absolutely incompatible with the possibility of investing that capital in a productive process that generates economic growth and social welfare.

It is precisely for this reason that Prof. Susan Strange called this system by a very appropriate name: "casino capitalism." This parasitic and profit-obsessed capitalism generates extremely high profit margins in favor of its purely speculative nature, and enormous corporate risks, because in the same way that very large amounts of money are earned in a financial operation that only takes a few minutes, a fortune can be lost overnight. This capitalism discourages investment in productive sectors, because even the capitalists most inclined toward investing in the production of goods find it hard to resist the temptation to place a rising share of their stock of capital in short-term speculative operations which, if successful, will guarantee them profit rates unthinkable in the industrial sector. This therefore generates disinvestment in the productive activities, prolonged economic recession, high unemployment rates (because for these speculative operations it isn't necessary to hire too many workers, nor to build factories or sow fields), a general impoverishment of the population, fiscal crisis

(because it is a mechanism of accumulation through which capital controls can be evaded, weakening states' financial foundations), and all this, in turn, has a very negative impact on the environment and, it goes without saying, on economic growth. It is unnecessary to state that the center of all this system is located in the United States. Not only the center; so is its principal political operator in the international arena, the White House, through the control that the Federal Reserve and Wall Street exercise on international financial markets and on the misnamed multilateral financial institutions, like the IMF, WB and WTO, which, as recognized by Zbigniew Brzezinski, are mere agencies of the United States government (Brzezinski, pp. 28-29).

One of the consequences of all the above has been the militarization of the international system and a rising trend to resort to violence to preserve a world order –in actual fact, a scandalous disorder– that is ever more unfair and inequitable. Another consequence: the crisis of the United Nations system and in international law. We have heard it in various presentations, particularly those made by Noam Chomsky and Perry Anderson. We can observe it, additionally, by watching the international scene on a day-by-day basis and the sorry role performed by the United Nations in this crisis. We see it, too, when we verify the accelerated dismantling of multilateral negotiation systems and the weakening of international law. The most evident proof was the invasion and the razing of Iraq without the authorization or the consent of the United Nations. Another of the consequences: the criminalization of social protest, in which the figures of the poor, the unemployed, the homeless or undocumented and, in general, of those who are condemned by the system, are Satanized and turned into sinister and dehumanized figures. In this way, the victims of capitalism, those who are condemned to exclusion and to slow genocide are transformed into criminals, drug traffickers or terrorists. Thanks to the alchemy of neoliberal globalization the victims evolve into culprits. Another of the consequences that is verified both in the central countries and in those on the periphery of the international capitalist system is the apparently unstoppable hollowing out of democratic régimes. Democracies that are ever less democratic, that have ever less popular legitimacy; that promote apathy and lack of interest in public affairs. Politics has turned into some-

6 This being a point that roundly disproves the neoliberal premise that the market is “the other face” of democracy. For an examination of this fallacy see Boron (2000).

thing that frequents the marketplace and is subdued to its tyranny; the street and the public square, deprived of its dynamism, are merely nostalgic memories of their past; elections have degenerated into a painful sham devoid of meaning and of transformational efficacy. Examples abound everywhere, as can be seen by reading the diverse papers collected in this book⁶.

All these precedents demonstrate that the morphology of the international imperialist system has, indeed, undergone major modifications. However, the latter have not altered the essence of the system. Globalization did not put an end to imperialism nor has it caused the latter to turn into its opposite. What it did do is accentuate the features that traditionally characterized this phase of capitalism, on the basis of a deepening of injustice and of inequity both within nations and in the international system. The traditional mechanisms of imperialism continue to stand: the exaction of natural resources and wealth; the sucking in of the periphery's surpluses towards the metropolitan centers; the role of financial capitalism, which, as we said above, has burgeoned extraordinarily; the monopolistic concentration that has reached unprecedented levels; the framework of rules that neoconservatism continues to be, in its most globalized form; and, above all, there still persist those institutions that in past, when it was said that imperialism was at its peak, made possible the iron-clad dictatorship of capital over the peoples and the countries of the periphery. Once again we refer fundamentally to the IMF, the WB, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the WTO, institutions which far from representing the international community are the docile instruments of the dominant classes at worldwide level and above all of United States imperialism.

Pending issues

Many matters, however, remain pending when it comes to obtaining an adequate and sufficient diagnosis of the imperialism of our days. Currently, one of the most important is the correct identification of the situation in the imperial center. There is a debate that has been underway for a long time, which has already materialized at the three World Social Forums in Porto Alegre and that also appeared at the meeting in Havana: it is the controversy over the current reality and the economic, political and military future of the United States.

Positions hover around two poles: there are those who assert that, after the crisis of the 1970s, we are in the presence of a recomposition of the U.S. hegemony in the military, economic, political and social fields; and there are those who, on the contrary, support a thesis that postulates the weakening of the United States in the world arena. The U.S. would thus have passed its peak and now faces its inexorable twilight. It is a debate that has not been settled and that in the future we shall need to continue broaching in all its complexity because it is in no way a minor issue.

The supporters of the latter view, which in its most general formulation we do not share but which it is convenient to examine in all its details, maintain that the United States has begun a slow but incurable decadence, and that because of this, the center of gravity of the world economy is shifting irreversibly towards Southeast Asia. The consequence of this mutation is that the imperialism we know today will surely not survive in the future. There are many works which point in this direction. The most recent and substantial in its argumentation is a book by Professor André Gunder Frank whose title *-Re-Orient-* proposes, precisely, returning to the Orient because it is there that the center of the world economy of capitalism supposedly was, several centuries ago, and will be (in a relatively near future). If this trend comes to pass, the United States would cease to perform the decisive role it now plays in the international system. We are not convinced by this posture because it underestimates the irreplaceable role that, at least for the foreseeable future, the United States performs and

7 It is no minor fact that in Latin America and the Caribbean there do not exist any study centers or research programs exclusively focusing on analyzing the *problématique* of the United States in its most varied aspects. The little there is to be found in Cuba, especially in the framework of the Center for Studies on America (CEA). Mexico had a couple of institutions devoted to the subject but they were purposely dismantled during the neoliberal wave unleashed by Salinas de Gortari and, above all, with entry into the Free Trade Agreement. It was no longer necessary to study the United States, something which certainly caused upset and distrust in governing circles North of the Rio Grande. Meanwhile, in the United States the centers, institutes and programs devoted to the study of Mexico and Mexican-U.S. relations add up to over a hundred! Brazil, too, currently has no study center devoted to the United States, although there is an attempt underway at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF). In the rest of the countries of the region there aren't even any attempts. The Menemist Argentina that exalted the "carnal relations" with the United States had no reason to busy itself with the subject, and the same goes for the other governments of the region. An extremely clear, clamorous proof that the other side of imperialism is colonialism over knowledge and power, and of the persistence of a tradition of subjection that has become flesh in our countries. We don't even make so bold as to venture to study those who, as Simón Bolívar said at the time, "seemed destined by Providence to plague the Americas with miseries in the name of freedom." Regarding colonialism over knowledge and power, see the excellent compilation by Edgardo Lander (2000).

will continue to exercise as the final custodian and coercionary reinsurance of the imperialist system. Additionally, it seems to us that a thesis like this one –as do others, which posit the impregnable and invincible nature of the empire– could eventually have serious demobilizing consequences, above all for us in Latin America and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, it is very important to discuss it. The future course of the United States and its role in the preservation of the imperialist order is a central issue for our peoples and, for this reason, constitutes a subject which will never be studied in excess⁷.

The other issue is the following: how to refine the analysis of imperialism in the current situation. I firmly believe that this is a very important point, both in the terrain of theory and in that of practical struggle. It is necessary to avoid falling into views of imperialism that transform it into an omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent phenomenon. If such a view gains strength in the ranks of its critics and coagulates in public conscience the logical consequence is irrefutable: imperialism is invincible, unbeatable, impregnable and, therefore, it makes no sense to even attempt to fight against it. We believe it important to point out that the geometry of imperialism is very complex and cannot be reduced to one dimension alone. To paraphrase an image proposed in a recent article by Joseph Nye (2003), one might say that imperialism deploys its assets on three levels, as if on three different chessboards. A first chessboard is the military one, in which, as was seen above, U.S. supremacy is absolute.

Of course it is convenient to introduce a note of caution here, because what is the meaning of an *absolute* military supremacy? Does it mean it can inexorably win all wars? But what does “win” mean? What is the lesson to be derived from Iraq or from Afghanistan? Robin Cook, former Foreign Minister of Great Britain, and who resigned precisely because of opposition to the complicity of Tony Blair’s government in the pillage perpetrated by George W. Bush and his friends, wrote a few days ago that “conquering Iraq probably was easy, but governing it as an occupied nation is a much more difficult challenge”. (Cook, 2004) The lesson which we can derive from recent events is the following: the formidable power of the United States military machinery allows the U.S. to raze a country. However, as is proved by the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq, Washington has demonstrated it is impotent when it comes to controlling the countries it has devastated. The North Americans have been unable to re-establish an order, even if it be an authoritarian and despotic order, to enable society to func-

tion again. Consequently, although U.S. military supremacy appears unarguable, the following question remains: when is a war won? After George W. Bush's famous public appearance in San Diego, on May 1st; 2003, many more North American victims have been harvested than before. It is therefore necessary to review with extreme care what it means to win a war. United States military supremacy may be very large, very overwhelming, but it reaches a certain point. And territorial control, the "normalization" of the conquered society, continues to be the true acid test that decides whether a war has been won or not, this being a truth that has been recognized by all the great theoreticians of war, from Sun-Tzu to von Clausewitz and Nguyen Giap, naturally including Machiavelli. It is also convenient to recall, to temper the diagnoses that only look at the asymmetries in weaponry, that the United States was defeated in Cuba, at the Bay of Pigs, and that it suffered a catastrophic and humiliating defeat in Vietnam. To summarize: the military supremacy of the U.S. is unquestionable, but it is not absolute.

The economic terrain would be the second chessboard on which imperialist relations are deployed. Although in the first one U.S. superiority is enormous, in this one Washington enjoys an undoubted but already much more limited predominance. Not only is it unable to impose a given international economic order on the countries of the periphery but it cannot even achieve a serious and effective agreement with its own allies in the European Union and Japan. The successive failures of WTO gatherings and of the proposals to sign the FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) are more than convincing proof in this regard. In other words: thirty years after the occurrence of the crisis in the Bretton Woods system –the "international order" shaped at the end of the Second World War– even today imperialism has been unable to build a stable economic order to replace it, with the ability to contain and solve the crises and contradictions roiling within it. Naturally, such a lack has not prevented the imperialists from continuing with their policies of pillage and sack. What can indeed be pointed out, instead, is that those operations are carried out within an increasingly unstable and unpredictable framework, and that they must resort ever further to the militarization of their domination for the system to work. All this doubtlessly conspires against the long-term stability of the system and the possibility of optimizing the results of their investments and corporate strategies.

The field of international civil society would be the third chessboard on which, according to Nye, imperialism plays its match. There the position of the United States is much more unfavorable after the disarticulation of the strategic alliances, the political and governmental systems and the ideological orientations that operated since the end of the second postwar period. The interminable succession of wrongs and dislocations of all kinds suffered by peoples, especially in the periphery, and the contradictions ensuing from the hegemony of neoliberalism, have led as a result to the constitution of an extremely broad array of social movements with overwhelming strength and which express themselves all over the world, from Seattle to Porto Alegre, and including Genoa, Gothenburg, Tokyo and Paris. In Latin America, and this was pointed out by Perry Anderson in his presentation, it is necessary to recognize the exceptional importance earned by Zapatism by issuing that first summons, at an international level, to the struggle for humanity and against neoliberalism. That exhortation acquired universal citizenship status with the holding of the World Social Forums in Porto Alegre and, afterwards, with the propagation of these protests along the length and breadth of the planet. This “movement of movements,” which encompasses large masses of workers, of youths, of women, of indigenous peoples, of minorities of every kind, of social sectors previously not incorporated into the dialectic of the confrontation with capitalism, now appears with extraordinary force, revealing the increasing weakness demonstrated by the old organizations (especially parties and unions) that, in a previous phase of capitalism, represented the demands of the sectors oppressed by the system. And this change in international civil society has been so sizeable that the uncontested hegemony that neoliberal thinking enjoyed until a few years ago –and which, for example, allowed the “lords of money”, as they are called by Subcommander Marcos, to meet in Davos enjoying virtually universal popularity– has evaporated to the point that they now have to gather in remote and inaccessible places, as if they were a gang of malefactors, in order to discuss their world domination plans. And this reveals the enormous change that has been recorded in the world correlation of forces, which, for the first time since the mid-70s, leads to an anti-neoliberal and potentially anti-capitalist counter-offensive that puts the dominant financial oligarchies on the defensive.

We believe, in consequence, that taking these precedents into account –and others which it would be necessary to add as the work-

ing agenda unfolds– it should be possible to advance toward a more elaborate and nuanced characterization of what imperialist domination is today, avoiding the theoretical and practical immobilism of those who assert there is nothing new under the sun and, at the same time, the pessimism that is the result of a summary evaluation –and one which in our judgement is superficial, being one-sided– of imperialism on the basis of United States military predominance.

A conclusion that is an invitation

No doubt about it –we are living in a very special moment in the history of imperialism: the transition from a classical phase to another, whose outline is only now being drawn but whose general shape can already be clearly discerned. Nothing could be further wrong than postulating the existence of a nebulous “empire without imperialism.” Hence the need to argue with these theses, given the exceptional gravity of the current situation: a capitalism that is ever more regressive and reactionary in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres, which criminalizes social protest and militarizes international politics on the basis of the absolute primacy of force. In the face of a situation like this one, as we maintained, only a precise diagnosis of the structure and operation of the international imperialist system will allow social movements, parties, unions and the popular organizations to broach the new days of struggle with some possibility of success. No emancipatory struggle is possible in the absence of an adequate social cartography of the terrain on which the battles will be fought. It is useless to lovingly project the features of a new society without a realistic knowledge of the physiognomy of current society and of the path which it will be necessary to traverse in the construction of that world in which (almost) all worlds will fit, to paraphrase the saying of the Zapatists. All the worlds of the oppressed, we would add, in order not to fall into a dangerous romanticism. In this new world that it is essential to begin to build right now there will be no room for the world of the militarist hawks; for the clique of the Bushes, Blairs, Aznars, Sharons and company; for the monopolies that turned humanity and nature into their prey; for the politicians and social leaders who accompanied and/or consented to the holocaust unleashed by neoliberalism. A post-capitalist and post-imperialist world is possible, but first we have to change the current one. And this is not achieved by

working on the basis of illusions but by acting with the grounding of a realistic and precise knowledge of the world we wish to leave behind and of the road we have to travel.

Allow me to conclude by saying that these discussions, stimulated by that noble striving of the social scientists and humanists linked to the CLACSO network to recover critical thinking, were facilitated by a very important factor: the contact established between Latin American critical thinking and the practice of the social movements that fight against neoliberalism, neoliberal globalization and, in the ultimate instance, against capitalism. This interaction has had a virtuous effect on both sides: it has enriched the output of social scientists, making it more acute and penetrating. And it has also improved the quality of the social leadership. At the conference which we reproduce in this book, Perry Anderson said that this continent is the only one which, in a constant manner and with significant theoretical density, had developed a notable intellectual production contesting and criticizing capitalism. We believe that this contact between social scientists and social movements marks a new milestone in the development of the social sciences, which in Latin America –and in the rest of the world– were activities that were carried out in the safe but sterile spaces of academe. Academicist sterility was a fundamental element in determining the deep crisis into which the social sciences fell as of the 1970s, a crisis from which they haven't yet recovered. The type of approaches and approximations that we have seen at this Conference in Havana has demonstrated to be much richer. The essential theoretical discussion that characterizes the social sciences has been enormously favored by the tight link that has been established on this continent, even though in an unequal manner, between the practice of social scientists and the praxis of social movements. To promote this dialogue is one of the distinctive goals of CLACSO and of many other national institutions in Latin America, and the success of this undertaking summons us to continue along this line, deepening this linkage, and knowing that in this manner we not only contribute to build a better world but, at the same time, produce social science of better quality.

This is, in very broad terms, a brief summary of the issues that have been discussed this week. Having said which, I would like to ask President Fidel Castro Ruz if he would have the kindness to pronounce the closing words of this conference. Thank you very much.

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CLOSING ADDRESS*

FIDEL CASTRO RUZ

I WAS TELLING Atilio that I congratulated him on his speech and I wasn't thanking him for his invitation. Distinguished academicians, scientists, representatives and leaders of social organizations, dear guests: I must tell you I have a bitter worry. From what I have been able to hear and from what I have been able to read of the papers presented, I am aware and understand full well that this is an event that has surpassed expectations. A series of earnest, well-meditated works have been presented. I am also familiar with the impressions garnered among many colleagues who have been present or who have followed it in the papers or on television. Also of those who, on Cuban television, saw two round tables this week. One of them devoted to the encounter in Mexico¹, the other to what happened this week here in Havana, and through which millions of people were able to hear the

* Speech given by the President of the Councils of State and of Ministers of Cuba, Fidel Castro Ruz, at the closing ceremony of the 21st General Assembly of CLACSO and 3rd Latin American and Caribbean Social Sciences Conference on October 31, 2003, at the Conventions Palace, Havana, Cuba.

¹ This refers to the International Conference "In Defense of Humanity," held in Mexico City on October 24 and 25. Henceforward, all footnotes are editor's notes.

arguments, the opinions of extremely eminent academic personalities and respected and admired leaders of social and political movements, or if you prefer, revolutionaries or quasi-revolutionaries.

Battle of ideas

We are in the habit of not carrying out surveys. We know what surveys are like. The questions are phrased seeking certain answers and they are often carried out in sectors that have specific opinions, for which reason –naturally, one cannot say that this is always the case– opinions are announced that do not correspond to the general case. The method we have been employing, especially when the battle was launched for the return of the child Elián², is that of collecting spontaneous opinions. There has always been a section of our party which collects opinions and a very large number of people cooperate on every subject, in order to orient us properly. This has been done for many years. I was referring rather to what we have been doing for four years, and which is to employ that team to ascertain opinion daily on the most important problems or most outstanding events that occur: an important round table, a major gathering... In sum, that is our habit. The only instruction received by the 17,000 people who cooperate in collecting spontaneous opinions is that from those that are positive opinions (from our point of view they would be the revolutionary opinions), a representative sample must be chosen; and the opinions we call negative –there is a somewhat more subtle term: the opinions that contain critical nuances– must all be written down in the list we receive. This method has been very useful.

On those first days related to the case of the child kidnapped in the United States –I mean the child kidnapped by the United States; the United States kidnaps thousands of children; I refer to the case of that child, for whom we decided to give battle, backed by demonstrations, gatherings, marches, etc.– among the opinions that were collected daily there were a number that were violent, absurd. They said: why isn't a commando unit sent to rescue the child in the United

2 Referring to the Cuban child Elián González, who was illegally taken out of Cuba on a boat by his mother Elizabeth Brotons. The boat sank and of the 14 people who attempted to reach United States soil, only three survived, Elián and two adults, who were rescued by two fishermen in waters close to Florida. The child's father, Juan Miguel González, who was unaware of his son's departure from Cuba, immediately requested his repatriation. Elián remained in the United States for over seven months until his return to Cuba was decided.

States? And such opinions appeared repeatedly. They were a minority. And thus, they weren't critical opinions, but were opinions that demonstrated lack of knowledge, disorientation. Think about the idea of a Cuban commando unit disembarking in the United States to look for that child. I was struck by the frequency with which that opinion was found. This struggle of opinions was decisive. We couldn't rescue this child by force. It was evident madness, but it demonstrated the state of opinion of irritated people who stated things without thinking about them. All these issues were discussed every day and often those points of view were useful to me because it was necessary to wait. I was able to observe that those opinions were based on lack of knowledge, lack of experience, lack of information, even a lack of certain criteria. There were times, even, when we collected a series of absurdities. And I read them out at a public event broadcast live to the entire country. I have even been able to see how criteria and opinions evolve. We have experienced a process of deepening of the knowledge and of the consciousness of our population. There is a lack of information here! Here it is necessary to effect a strong criticism of certain points of view because they are erratic!

I am speaking about something that, as I said, began four years ago. It is in December that four years will be marked since that struggle began. This was such a tough, such a bitter case, that it led me to take the decision to demand the child's return. Which couldn't be by force. I said that the child had to return, and this battle was really won through the mobilization of the people; it was won through a battle by international opinion. Since then I have been employing that term, which we now see being repeated ever more frequently: "battle of ideas." Even when, seven months later, the child returned, we had already decided to continue that battle. Because the child could come back and it was stupid to delay it so long. It even gave us time to stage José Martí's anti-imperialist rostrum in front of the United States interests office. During the course of that battle a lot of experience was accumulated and, it goes without saying, the battle of ideas was won.

And it was even won employing these modern media that are so frequently used to confuse the world and to mislead it. This is because there is also a certain competition among large corporations, from the United States and from other countries. We had thought up a form of making some television broadcasts that reached Angola –where a large number of our men had been clustered on that country's southern border, facing the Namibia occupied by the South Africans– through a

station with Soviet technology; and employing I don't know how many towers, we caused some hours of Cuban broadcasting to reach the 55,000 Cubans who were then there. It may seem a bit exaggerated, but there are certain problems that if not looked into entail the almost certain risk of a defeat. The revolution could not run that risk. I must say that, more than an internationalist mission, the revolution was staking its very existence. Imagine what would have happened in circumstances like those, in which we were ready to reach the ultimate consequences, if there had been a major defeat with high casualties. I must add that this always compelled us to carry out a type of war, ever since we launched the revolution, that would entail a minimum number of casualties, for one reason or another. When we were in the mountains, because there were very few of us; and when the revolution was already in power and carrying out an internationalist mission—a duty, as we understood it—we had the responsibility for the destiny of a process and for the fate of a people. Maybe, on hearing this, one gets the idea that we carried out foolhardy actions. No. Because the first action that might be termed foolhardy, and which many described as such, was to launch a revolution starting practically with nothing.

At the moment I was referring to, four years ago, we had even forgotten about it already. One day it occurred to me to think—and this will make you laugh, and with reason—and I asked some colleagues how much a balloon might cost. I was thinking of a balloon that is used in the United States to broadcast television to Cuba. Actually, with a tiny little piece of equipment costing a few cents we have managed to neutralize that arbitrary, illegal action, which violates international norms, of putting a balloon 3,000 feet up for the TV signal to reach our country. And not precisely to teach us English, or to teach us history, geography, science, literature, culture... but to channel toward our country the mountain of lies and calumnies with which the United States' official policy has operated with regard to our country and, from what I see and hear and from what we know, with regard to the rest of the world. One must not forget the monopoly of the mass media which the United States has enjoyed. And our intellectuals have met more than once to discuss the extremely serious problem of the atrocious cultural invasion suffered by the peoples of Latin America and the rest of the world. And which in my judgement and in view of the cultural level that these analyses have reached is an issue that needs to be included. It is an issue to which Ignacio Ramonet, well known to all, has fundamentally devoted his

work. But if it is illegal we intercept it, because there is not only the lie of a political nature but also all the poison from an ethical standpoint, all the exaltation of violence, of consumerism, etc. Because even Internet communications in our country are limited given the lack of an infrastructure that will connect us via international cable. Which limits our possibilities and is a problem needing to be solved. While, over there, in a moment of madness they installed 60 million kilometers of optical fiber under natural gas pipelines, etc., of which around 3 or 4 million are employed. There are 100 billion dollars of optical fiber buried and wasted there.

Major changes have taken place. And new forms of communication gradually appear, but they were not within our reach at that time. We managed to finance a satellite. There were like 5,000 study centers in the United States that listened to these events, these broadcasts, over a span of time. When we managed to air the broadcasts, we provided the signal for free inside and outside, so that 10, 15, 20, 25 international TV networks would come in, and at the ceremony at which we marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the blowing up of a Cuban flight in mid-flight, which annihilated our entire champion youth fencing team which in a regional competition had won all the gold medals, at that ceremony at which we remembered the twenty-fifth anniversary of that great terrorist act organized within the United States, by people trained by the United States, and financed by the United States, forty foreign broadcasters reported on it; some broadcast it complete and others broadcast some minutes of it. It was international television networks, including United States broadcasting networks, that made it possible, in certain circumstances because it doesn't always work that way or even remotely like it, but competition has been created.

Suppose there is a demonstration by half a million people –a real half million, because we know how many people there can be. In a square meter there rarely fit more than four people, and squeezed together there may be five. We are in the habit of using underestimates so that many agencies didn't even question the figures when there was a demonstration by thousands of women, or of youths, or of mothers with their children –these are events that every station will surely broadcast. Or the events in Iraq or the resistance in that country. Or things such as happen to some of the very illustrious guests whom we greatly appreciate and who in one case, faced by a question by a TV

station, said, "And why don't you look me up in the United States and interview me there?" Need anything more be said?

Cuba and the United States people

In this way we managed to get the world to know, and more importantly, we managed to get the United States people to know, the truth of what was going on. Among them such atrocious things as the fact that they reconstructed the setting in which that child's tragedy had occurred and they kept interrogating him for eight hours. A six-year-old boy who had undergone the tragedy of a sinking in which he had lost the person he loved the most: his mother. And to me this was a great proof of the virtue of the U.S. people. I have never let myself be carried away by irrational hatreds, or to be blinded. I attempt to analyze things coolly. The precedent had already taken place of the war in Vietnam and of the participation of the people of the United States in ending that war. The protests against the injustice of that war gradually gained ground. Hundreds of thousands of youths who had been sent to that war were undergoing their compulsory draft. It wasn't even a professional army: they were recruits, a similar situation to that of the Nicaraguan process in which the dirty war led them to the defeat of Sandinism by virtue of the fact that soldiers were compelled by law to go and fight and die in that war. In the case of the kidnapped boy there was no war, there were no victims, there were no bodies. What there did exist were facts all related to the child and to the rights of his family. Eighty percent of U.S. public opinion backed the return of the child and it was a decisive factor. Without that support of public opinion the same would have happened as in the case of many others that have been taken illegally.

There are numerous reports about people who are seriously injured or who die as a consequence of a law that we call murderous. The "Cuban Adjustment Act," by which a criminal, someone who kills a tourism worker or a fisherman to travel illegally to the United States, people with criminal records to whom they would never give a visa, by virtue of that law which is already over thirty years old, are recognized as legal immigrants, with full rights –Cubans who set foot on United States soil. In Cuba they award only 2,000 visas, when there is always an enormous demand for visas or number of people attempting to emigrate as there have already emigrated 14 or 15 mil-

lion Mexicans, without counting Central Americans and citizens of all countries, from Haiti, Santo Domingo, even Puerto Rico, supposedly a wealthy colony. The statistics are known of those who have opened the gates wide for Cubans as a result of that law. And they have included murderers, and that has cost who knows how many lives. One can speak of thousands of lives and along that path how often has a father taken the child away from the mother, and how often the mother taken the child from the father completely illegally. The only time we decided to undertake that battle we were committed to undertaking it and winning it. And we won it without the least use of force, without the least resort to violence, only moral force, the force of arguments and condemnation. And there remained in reserve a number of very strong measures of a civil nature. There was no need to employ them, since 80% of the population –which speaks highly of the U.S. people's virtues– supported the cause! A bad cause demands, in the first place, that the citizenry be tricked. In that they are indeed experts, or have been experts. Historically, over the course of a century or more, history demonstrates it.

What I am saying is a factor to take into account, because I believe that the battle about which I have been talking will have to be won, or will sooner or later be won, with the support of the North American people. It isn't a question of whether they are powerful or not. I believe that there is something more powerful than weapons: ideas, reason, the morality of a cause. Of course, this is so at each moment in history. But this is the moment in history in which ideas propagate fastest. Much faster than at the time of the French Revolution, when the thinking of the Encyclopedists arrived through pamphlets, and thus Francisco de Miranda, a precursor of independence, and several others drenched themselves in those ideas and had a very large influence. I am not attempting here to present a thesis. Rather, my concern was with having to improvise some words, giving in to the pressures of my friends when I didn't have the time to prepare and dictate a speech, to read all the points of view and documents presented here. I would have liked to. I have moved around with a stack of papers from one place to the next to try to be well informed. In fact, to go through the documents, things, ideas that we have posed. For this reason I have brought some materials along in case I need them. Really, what I am doing is expressing what my point of view was, posing some ideas, not presenting a thesis. That is the regret I came with and the reason I did not say thank you. Because this is a

very earnest event. Documents, analyses have been presented that will enter history within a limited timespan, and information, criteria, viewpoints have been contributed that have taught us a lot. I intend to continue to learn. That is why I say that what I am trying to do here is to provide some criteria, some points of view, some opinions; to express some feelings with the drawbacks inherent in improvised speeches. Because among other things you know when they start but not when they end. Because one idea triggers another. Because one is in the habit of explaining things. I don't like to say this is so because it's so. I try to explain myself and that is where I run into complications. I didn't want to speak yesterday, but I didn't have any way out. Today I came with the intention of being brief and I maintain it. Don't you be discouraged.

Militarization on a planetary scale

Within what each person thinks, I have the absolute conviction that the U.S. people will play a very important role. The U.S. people aren't our enemy. It is the imperialist system that is our enemy. It is the empire that has emerged from that country –I won't call it nation. It is a bit conventional to use the word "nation." That sum of states, that power that has been attained by what was born from a small group of colonists who came to this hemisphere seeking more religious freedom, which is where, in my judgement, evident ethical principles arise. This power had –yesterday one of the panelists mentioned that it had over a hundred military bases– and of course that little base they have here illegally³. It is the only base that is there against the will of the government, because, supposedly, in Europe, in Asia, in Japan and everywhere, they accept the presence of those bases. From time to time some country, I don't know if it was the Philippines, did not agree with a base over there. Someone also recalled that space has turned into a possession of that great power's. Any place in space. And reference was made here, I think by Prof. Chomsky, to the idea of turning it into a military base and ferrying nuclear weapons there that might be used from space. And ever more bases! There was also talk here of the bases in Latin America. And a few days ago, as news arrived from

³ This refers to the Perry Anderson's speech, collected in this volume, and to the United States base of Guantánamo, at the eastern tip of Cuba. It is believed to be the biggest military base of all those which the United States has outside its territory.

Bolivia in the midst of the most acute phase of the crisis, I read a report that spoke of the United States troops located on the border between Peru and Bolivia, ready to go into action if circumstances required it. The conditions are ready for an intervention. Bases everywhere they are given permission. Military exercises. These large and extremely powerful armies, navies and air forces of Latin America are constantly alongside the armed forces of the United States, are carrying out exercises, along Patagonia, along southern Argentina, along Chile. Every so often they also sell a submarine. And they don't sell aircraft carriers because they have become very expensive and turn out to be almost useless. But they carry out exercises every day. And these exercises –why? Who is going to attack? We have no news that the Martians– not the followers of Martí but the inhabitants of Mars –are readying an expedition that will endanger the independence, the sovereignty of those countries.

Why the maneuvers? Well, it's silly to ask why. One would have to ask why a lot of garbage exists. They aren't even necessary to keep countries dominated. They aren't even necessary for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) or the World Trade Organization (WTO) to exist. They aren't necessary for the existence of the system of domination imposed on the world. They aren't necessary to establish neoli-beral globalization, or fascist neoliberal globalization as one of the clever journalists present wrote. They are training troops for world intervention. That is what they do in the countries of Latin America: train the troops with which they will intervene at any moment. As if we were to engage in joint exercises with the armed forces of the United States! We, who offer to cooperate with the coast guard in any operation! We have proposed it, and no. We have proposed agreements to combat the traffic in immigrants, and no. There is that murderous Cuban Adjustment Act by virtue of which no sooner do they set one foot down there, they already have the right of residence and of employment; it is a great dilemma at this time. On one hand, taking measures, tightening the screws, to impede illegal entry into the United States; and, on the other hand, keeping a law that is applied to only one country in the world, which is Cuba, giving right of entry. But if with fake papers they take a plane in any country and manage to enter the United States they have the right to identify themselves as Cubans and to be working the next day and to reside in the United States! What a contradictory measure! I don't know how they will be able to maintain it. This morning I read a

cable that posed the need to squeeze much tighter against illegal immigration. All the world knows that the number of millions of illegals isn't rightly known. There has been talk of five million, of six; there may be more. They have threatened to expel them. There was talk here, too, of the situation of the immigrants. Someone asked why they weren't given education, why they couldn't go to school, why they did not receive medical services. Those immigrants produce surplus value, and more surplus value than anyone.

And excuse me if I have just used a Marxist term. All of that isn't forbidden. As I always say, we have a large theater here that was called Carlos Marx. This theater continues to be called Carlos Marx. There is a statue that was made by a brilliant Soviet sculptor. A statue of Lenin in a park that is called Lenin. The park continues to be called Lenin and the statue of Lenin hasn't been made to explode with a ton of dynamite. You know that what has become fashionable in many parts of the world is to tear down statues, change the name of all cities. It is a lack of respect for history. If I was called Fidel when I was born nobody would think to say that Juan was born instead of Fidel, that day at that place, the son of that father and that mother. That's because historical events have to be respected in general.

Well, the truth be said: we changed names too. We did it for ideological reasons. There were many sugar centers and they were given the names of people, of heroes of the revolution. Here, many schools bear the names of illustrious personalities. I was born between three large sugar centers that bore the names of big U.S. corporations. One of them even was what was then called the United Fruit Company. In the United States they also change the names of corporations. They associate, build up something new. But, well, one feels shame. I cannot call Petrograd Leningrad. Intellectuals know that Lenin was a great intellectual, a great fighter and one of those who tried hardest, in the midst of his daily work, to investigate imperialism. And he based himself on other authors too, but he was one of the first who used the term "imperialist" in the modern sense of the word. Now there is going to be a need for someone who emulates Lenin and defines this imperialism of today. The new imperialism is an imperialism with different characteristics from that which we could talk about in 1914. With an expansionary power that was already advancing. At that time if there was one principal power it was the land of Blair, a great glory of the civilized, progressive and democratic thinking of our era (one mustn't be slanderous...) Even in the United States

it is known that Roosevelt wasn't very happy with Great Britain. One knows about his discussions with Winston Churchill there in Tehran and other places; it is known that Roosevelt hoped that after the war India and other countries would attain their independence, since they were large markets in which Great Britain's merchandise and products had privileges. They had their contradictions. Until the Second World War, the British empire prevailed; the United States even entered into its isolationism. It is known that Roosevelt was the author of the lengthy struggle to enroll the United States against Nazism. What would Roosevelt have said –Roosevelt, whose personal qualities we know, who was the president of a great power that was then ranked second as a world power alongside the U.S.S.R. too (Germany was still a fearsome military power, and he fought against that power)! And now, if he saw all these things that you have been discussing here, if he had this information... He was a cultivated person, he read, he knew about politics. He faced the worst crisis that capitalism had encountered. I said yesterday that historical events come earlier or come later depending on subjective factors. I am absolutely convinced of it, simply by reading history and observing events. These events and statements made in the name of the United States by the government of the United States, that would have floored Roosevelt. There are, truth be said, more intellectuals who should get down to reading Roosevelt's speeches in the years before the war and the pronouncements of Hitler who spoke of the vital space that it was necessary to conquer there where there were inferior races, in the east, in Russia, in the Ukraine, which were then the Soviet Union. I suggest a comparative study. There are so many things to research, so many things to remember, to compare in order to extract the pertinent conclusions. Roosevelt never imagined a power such as that which today imposes itself on the world, such as is today predominant in the world. Which does not mean that such a power is invincible. It has been said that its technological superiority is fabulous, that this power alone gathers a technology and a wealth greater than that of all the other great powers. Well, there no longer are great powers, there is one great power. Great powers were two equal things, and there no longer is anything equal between the military power of the United States and the current power of Russia. China is a great nation, it is a strong power and it is launching a stage that will lead it to be one of the great nations of the world by virtue of its size, its population, its talent. Because one cannot but recognize that the Chinese are talented –suffice it to know that

the Chinese can read and write... in Chinese. One must recognize they have the right to a Nobel prize.

Imperialism is not invincible

What is it that condemns that power of a military nature –with those hundreds of bases that were being talked about, and independently of the alliance of reactionary forces existing all over the world– to end? Ideas that are just, at the right moment, in the appropriate historical circumstances. As is known, there hasn't been a single empire that was eternal. Hitler at one time spoke of a thousand-year empire. He dreamed of a Germany so powerful that for a thousand years it would be the biggest power in the world. Actually, of the thousand years, there were nine hundred and eighty-eight years left over. If there is someone of those who think that this empire will last a thousand years, by virtue of its fabulous technological, scientific, economic, military power, maybe it won't reach a hundred years. In all certainty that power won't make it to fifty. That power ranges, I sincerely believe, between twenty and fifty years. I don't refer to the U.S. nation, whose destruction or decadence nobody wishes. We desire for the people of that great state the same fate we can wish and should wish for every other people of the entire world. Starting from the premise that this world can be fixed. Without ceasing to be realistic.

What characterizes this moment almost with a precision measured in minutes is that it is a time of change, of a switch in direction in history. And not to establish powers but to establish rights. The peoples of today have, in certain senses, fewer rights than the famous clans that are talked about. Fewer rights than the tribes of Asia, Africa or the Middle East. I don't know the details of this because little is known about the history of this humanity. According to scientists this species is called *Homo sapiens*, rightly or wrongly. Because over the course of history it has demonstrated –if we take last century as a reference, no other conclusion can be arrived at– it was a century filled with absurdities, lacking in wisdom. Let us hope that in this century our species earns itself the title of *Homo sapiens*. Although we have started out very badly. Moreover, another conviction: we are the point in which it is decided if this species survives or perishes. Survives despite the errors, the lack of wisdom that it has suffered. But it is the great things, marvelous things, feelings and values that human talent

has been able to create that encourage the hopes of realistic optimists. Up to this very moment we are moving backwards, but we are already at the point in which widespread –I won't say universal– conscience is being acquired of realities. This minute is transcendental. It is full of queries, of a wish for hope and a wish for solutions. This meeting has demonstrated it and you were expecting what you have been unable to produce and could not have produced: a series of recipes for solutions to problems. But you have achieved a lot. I haven't seen, and I have been at many meetings, such an interesting meeting as this one. Five years ago discussions still hovered around something else. Ten years ago what there was was universal demoralization; never have I seen so many people change their clothes, never have I seen so much opportunism and so much cowardice. Here there has been the courage to condemn; I refer to everyone, also to the courage of those who think differently. One must not be fanatical; we have the duty to be rational, to trust in criteria and points of view.

Democracy

A lot is talked about democracy, and in all frankness I say to you that finding it is very difficult. A needle in a haystack. There isn't a model for democracy; I dissent with the point of view of one of the lecturers. Perhaps in some corner of the world there exists some democratic formula. Somebody mentioned fraternity, equality and liberty, famous watchwords of the French Revolution. None of the three exists if we speak in earnest. There is envious talk of the freedom that was known by the people of the clan. There was no imperialism, there was no colonialism, there was no slavery. They lived freely collecting fruit, hunting, until someone invented a club to seek food. Slavery represented progress because they ceased to eliminate the prisoners taken in wars, because a surplus could already be achieved. It is a theory that must have some truth in it. It would be necessary to analyze other factors: the parasitism that was being launched. One should never try to attach a sole explanation to the problem. Already slavery was considered progress. And now, when a power, by virtue of its wealth and its military power governs the world and imposes its laws, how can it stated that it is the end of history? That already what is being done is what should exist for ever and ever, amen. Unarguably, the history of this humanity, and not because it was said by Karl Marx should one

be opposed to it, is the history of the exploitation of man by man to an ever greater degree. Where does Bill Gates live? Because I assume he does not live inside a computer. Let us assume he lives in New York. There are hundreds of people who live under bridges and cover themselves with newspapers. What is equal between Bill Gates and that man who lives covering himself with newspapers under a bridge?

There are now in the United States several million people who are illiterate, but mainly functional illiterates, who have failed sixth grade, who suffer the consequences of a disastrous educational system. I refer to primary and high-school education, not to university levels. The best professors in the world end up there, the Nobel winners. They have all the research centers they want. From the countries of Latin America they have thousands and thousands of professional people, university people, the best trained people, who have emigrated to the developed countries. To those countries, so democratic and so honest, that haven't spent a cent on them, on training them; and most of them have gone to the United States. And those countries have neither research centers, nor resources; no possibilities. When has a Latin American won a Nobel prize, except in literature? An entire novel emerges from one's head, but research, in addition to a head and to knowledge, requires the means and the resources that allow it to be carried out. How can there be equality within a society in which millions of illiterates and semi-illiterates exist? In this world which now has six billion inhabitants. And someone recalled here that within eight years there will be around 7.2 billion inhabitants in this small planet in a destruction phase. I believe that Evo⁴ spoke yesterday about the existence in Bolivia of a law to privatize water. And water is ever more scarce; it is a statistical fact, the product of scientific research. And water may possibly be one of the causes of military conflict. One need do no more than glance at the map of the Middle East, and see how much water each one has, where it rains, which one has irregular terrain. Now there is talk about the problem of Iraq. Soon the talk will be about the lack of water in Iraq. And on this water depend Syria, the Middle East, Israel, Jordan and Iraq. Well, since some of them have oil, nature gave others water, and I will sell water. There are already water exports in that

4 Evo Morales is president of the federation of coca leaf producers in Chapare, and popular leader of the struggle against neoliberal policies. Over the last four years he has been a congressman for the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) in Bolivia.

region. Of course there are places where oil is cheaper than water. In Venezuela, for example, oil is cheaper than water.

The air is being poisoned too. There is no equality. How is a man who can't read and write to understand the problems of the world –the IMF, the WTO, the Group of Eight, the OECD, the banking system, what is inflation and deflation, what does speculation with the currency mean? I was trying to speak of the millions that are invested in speculation. A generally accepted figure about that speculation refers to 1971, when Nixon unilaterally suppressed gold conversion since the United States was left with 10 billion dollars in gold of the 30 billion it had had at the time of Bretton Woods⁵. Afterwards, in the midst of world chaos and due to the conflicts in the Middle East, one day a group of countries got together and established a limit on oil production. Another phenomenon that cannot be forgotten took place, and it was that oil began to rise in price. In the years 1974/1975 oil reached 35 dollars per barrel. When the revolution won, at world market prices, with a ton of sugar one bought eight tons of oil. Today, as a consequence of neoliberalism, several factors have led to the end of the agreements on basic products. Brazil set itself to producing cane, even to make alcohol when gasoline cost 500 dollars a ton. I remember I was doing the math to know how many dollars they obtained from a hectare of cane. Sugar was still at 10-12 cents a pound and production rose to 20 million tons of sugar; in India the same happened: 20 million tons of sugar. In Mexico the state sectors thought after the signing of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States that they would sell all the sugar they produced and when the moment came to export the sugar they were not allowed to. The fructose industry had already arisen, fructose costing half of what beet sugar costs, and Mexico began to have surplus sugar. What will happen, if it hasn't happened already? I haven't had the time to follow the history of the Mexican sugar sectors. The state had ruined them and therefore they were being privatized. They were told they would have a future under the Agreement, but now they don't buy their sugar and the world price has hit rock bottom. Therefore, what does the state do, those marvelous, super-democratic social systems –one must

5 The Bretton Woods (New Hampshire, United States) agreements were signed in 1944 and established the new rules of the game that were to regulate the operation of the international economy after the Second World War ended. Those agreements also gave rise to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and to the World Bank (WB).

never forget that? (One must not be a slanderer!) They nationalize the plants when they are ruined! They cannot close plants down because there is so much inequality in society that closing five plants could mean strikes and social problems. The remedy arrives, the so-called anti-neoliberalism, the anti-privatization: it is the philosophy of nationalization every time that private industries are ruined. That was the philosophy before this neoliberal globalization: everything that was ruined went over to the state. With which the loss of prestige of the state increased enormously, because in the hands of administrators who stuck their hands into everything it worked even worse. We arrive at the moment in which the Brazilian case took place: the biggest iron company in the world that was profitable, privatized. The phone companies, privatized. Forty billion dollars in corporations that were profitable –they privatized them. They had 70 billion dollars in reserves!

But the IMF exists, and there exists a law that isn't at all democratic. And you know how the IMF lends. There is a clause that with 17% it is decided if there is a loan or not⁶. An extraordinary, super-democratic case, of a country that says yes or no to a Third World country. That business of the so-called First World entails a bit of contempt towards us, and I confess it: those never have problems with IMF loans. But it does occur for a country of the Third World, where there are so many people going hungry, so many sick people lacking medical assistance, so many illiterates, such a scarcity of schools, of food, of employment; in those cases they must indeed argue in order to get a loan. And that's when the conditions, the worst, are imposed on them. But this is not a static phenomenon. When the Cuban revolution won, Latin America owed 5 billion dollars. I was the bird of ill omen because I visited Argentina; in those days I had passed through Brazil; three or four months had passed since the victory of the revolution. In Argentina there was Frondizi. Perón was who decided which candidate won; he wasn't going to propose him but he had become friendly with the workers; in those days there were gold reserves from after the war. We know that history. But the workers had many things they had never had. Some theaters, some clubs. A rich country. Maybe the only bad thing that could have happened to Argentine workers, in the midst of unquestionable benefits, is that

⁶ Loans must be agreed with 85% of the votes of the Board. The United States has 17% of those votes, with which it exerts de facto veto power over the IMF's decisions.

they were left with capitalism. All that oligarchy was humiliated but it was not nationalized; it was not confiscated.

We confiscated. But we were prepared to pay within a prudential, appropriate time. And what we got was a blockade. The country of constitutions and of laws, as is stated, did not wish to discuss an indemnity formula. Credits had already been suspended. Money in reserves there was none. A silly fact: the money had been stolen by a government that enjoyed the support of that great power that embraced and armed it. Ah, because that government, too, was described as democratic. Because every government is called democratic: like Argentina during the disappearances, Chile under Pinochet, Central America, El Salvador, Nicaragua. With none of those countries were ties broken. With none did they cease to trade. With South Africa they not only traded but had large properties there. None did anything save amass money, covet a lot of gold; neither broken relations, nor economic blockades. Not that I am advocating those things, but I am making comparisons. No, it was necessary to blockade Cuba. Cuba had no business in South Africa, no factory, no industry. Cuba fought against the South African fascists. Cuba spilled its blood while all the others maintained ties and business. Cuba doesn't have a screw there. Cuba must be blockaded. And it's not a question of a month or a year. It must be blockaded forty-four years. Nobody should believe that it has been forty-two years. The blockade began on the first day. Credits were cut off. The money in the reserves had already been transferred by the war criminals, who were no better than those who were judged and punished there in Nuremberg. They took the money and founded those organizations that today almost govern more than the government of the United States. It was precisely those people and the descendants of the millionaires that took the country's money.

And for us, the blockade. Well, the dirty war. In the first months after we carried out the land reform the plans for destroying the revolution were launched. It seemed that the same was going to happen as in Guatemala. You know that it was an agrarian reform that led to an intervention of the United States in combination with the moves of some military chiefs. The pretext was that the Guatemalans, they say, had bought a shipload of weapons in Czechoslovakia. I don't know if someone who buys weapons in Czechoslovakia today is invaded. Because today the Czech republic is one of those great puppets, those perfect democracy where if they don't look out there won't

be a Gypsy left because they will exterminate them. They will do to them what the Nazis did to the Jews. Don't believe that the hatred they feel for the Gypsies is any less in those marvelous democracies of Eastern Europe, which are more pro-U.S., which are already members of NATO. It is the reign of justice and progress, the greatest striving ever for the welfare of humanity! Why, they are more imperialist than Aznar, which is saying a lot already! Yes, Aznar, who is going round recruiting youths in Nicaragua, in El Salvador, in the Dominican Republic which is suffering a terrible crisis of fourteen hours without electricity, of entire areas that have been up to three days without power, where the peso has been devalued to 33 pesos per dollar. Nobody talks about that. It seems the euro has carted off all the publicity. And Bolivia –nobody says what is going on there. And the *maquiladoras*, whose fate is well known: Mexicans had the experience of the *maquiladoras*, which the owners are already carting off to China. *Maquiladoras* that don't pay taxes, that take components there to be assembled and although they are paid a bit higher wages than what domestic industry pays, the people massively want to emigrate to the United States. And 500 human beings are dying on the border per year. More than died during the 29 years of the Berlin Wall. About the Berlin Wall the press talks, the world still talks. But about the wall there is between the United States and Mexico, in the territory that was snatched away from that country in an expansionary war –that wall isn't mentioned. There are already 500. I have seen a cable talking about the organizations that exist in the occupied U.S. territory that have organized themselves as groups of hunters, to hunt those who don't die suffocated, run over on the highways, high-speed roads, trying to escape the vigilance.

That phenomenon is also threatening this collective or sole imperialism, whichever way you want to call it. It is a matter of taste. I only see one giving orders and telling the others what they have to do. And the others will in any case be sub-imperialists, vice-imperialists, office assistants of an imperialism. What do they do? The obey orders. It is terrible to obey orders. We have all defended the United Nations, and on principle, although it has committed more than one mistake, because that famous empire has twisted its arm more than once. Now they are going to convince us that there is democracy in the United Nations, and that they are providing an example to the entire world of what democracy is. There, where 80% vote against the blockade because it is already something so contemptible and so disgusting

that nobody defends it. The United States is left with the vote of Israel and of a little island –well, for me there are no big or little islands– of a small state. Three votes. Year after year it was been growing. The scare was so great when the socialist camp fell that we got 56, 57 votes against the blockade. It was a tragedy to see the ambassadors to the United Nations, where they hid themselves, what they did, what they invented, whether they went to the bathroom, because the voting is open. If at the United States the voting were secret as the rules establish, the number of votes there against the proposals of the United States would be multiplied tenfold. One must be bold to vote at the United Nations. Notice that in a secret vote they expelled the United States government from the Human Rights commission. Cuba is always chosen. The country that has submitted most motions in favor of the true rights and interests in favor of peoples is Cuba. It has never abandoned a cause. Of course, that voting is secret. And in secret votes Cuba obtains an uproar. And that secret voting punishes a hypocritical policy of condemning Cuba on human rights. Nobody wants to condemn Cuba.

Terrorism

We have a clear position on terrorism: during the revolution acts of terrorism were never carried out. I mean to say: there never was economic sabotage against cane and that kind of activity. I don't recall in our entire little war, which lasted twenty-five months, the case of a single civilian killed because of that war. Today, defending the fatherland has turned into terrorism. We are opposed to actions that lead to the death of innocent people. We shall never support any action like that. The causes may be understood; we have to analyze and explain them. Circumstances are not alike in all places. In some it is easier to stick to a line. And we stuck to it during the entire war. Never was a prisoner beaten, mistreated, executed. Of course, the policy toward the population and the policy toward the foe were factors that helped us to win the war in a very short time and with a minimum of weapons. First the foes fought to the death, and then there were soldiers who surrendered. They had a certain discipline, they had military training because Batista's soldiers were drilled, and by United States instructors. But then every time they were in a losing battle they did not resist to the last. They knew they would not be executed

after defeat. It is an ethics we have stuck to, and yet, how often have they stated that there is torture in our country! Prove a single case of torture. We offer them what we possess and what we don't possess, we give them everything, if they can prove just one. There is the history of what happened at the Bay of Pigs, an invasion with mercenaries, attacked by United States planes with Cuban markings. A surprise attack. But on August 15 they touched our airfields, our tiny air force. There were more planes than pilots. We committed the foolishness of having the planes all lined up, as the Soviets had when the World War started –technology of Soviet academic discipline. Thank goodness we applied our own criterion in all essential things. But some foolishness did get copied. For us it was a line of conduct in the war. We made laws establishing punishment with severe penalties. In the matters related to the penalties our own criteria have gradually varied, although we never sympathized with capital punishment. But the problem was when our small guerrilla force had the need to apply a severe penalty, and they were very few. The problem resided in seeking, in selecting the people to carry out the execution of the penalty. That was an order that our fighters found repugnant. That is the morality, the ethics, in which we have organized ourselves over the course of 44 years. I would dare to ask whether anyone has heard of a war in which no enemy prisoner has been executed. I don't know if the United States war of independence was so absolutely saintly that they never shot a prisoner. On the basis of what I know of the history of wars, of all wars and everywhere, shooting prisoners almost forms part of a culture. Sometimes they do so en masse; other times they do so individually. I don't know of a single case. But when we were attacked using our own markings, we had many more casualties than the attackers. It was precisely because of the surprise attack and because the fighting took place day and night, without any rest, which gave no time to the invaders to set up a puppet government there, so that in such a democratic manner as they have always acted, they would have invited us as platoons of the different countries of the OAS accompanying, for example, the 40,000 soldiers sent to Santo Domingo at the time of the Dominican rebellion in 1965.

They now come to Latin America to recruit youths to invade Iraq. In 500 years that had never happened. Unheard of. Never did a Spanish gentleman come here to recruit Latin Americans to fight in Morocco, in the Philippines, in any colony! The only case: Spaniards sent a troop of Cubans to the war of independence of the United

States. Entire battalions of mulattos were sent and fought for the independence of the United States. So that if they really brought us freedom in the year 1898, including the sacrifice of paying Spain 150 million dollars for the purchase of Cuba, well, it left us even –Cubans had gone to fight for the independence of the United States. From the logical point of view you know the history well. It isn't my intention to describe it here. But, well, this man comes here to recruit Latin Americans under the command of the Spanish legion, and the part about the group of mercenaries is under the command of the Polish leadership. None other than the country that for 600 years was invaded every ten or twenty years. There the church of the Catholic religion and the Polish nation were united over the course of those years.

And today, there, at the head of that force; under the command of the Spanish legion, the young Latin Americans. It's horrible. What are they doing there? It would have been fairer to send a million dollars to the Dominicans instead of asking for Dominican blood for a war of conquest. Everybody knows what the Cuban position has been. During the other war we were on the Security Council, and we had a critical position⁷. We could not be in agreement with the occupation of Kuwait. That was politically unfair and mistaken. It's as if we now claimed Florida since it was a possession of the colony of Cuba. There were serious political mistakes and we condemned them. Neither did we favor other actions, which in our view were mistaken, undertaken by the Iranian leadership. And with the same morality we condemn a war of conquest to take possession, by military means if necessary, of the reserve of oil that is so essential for this civilization. So essential that it cannot do without it, so essential that it is destroying nature and poisoning the atmosphere. It has been proven and it was known that no such weapons existed. It is known how many children died. A blockade... The blockade against us was tens of years older. Currently, by virtue of a law that was sabotaged as much as possible, the sale of food for cash is authorized to our country. A majority of the Senate with 36 against backed the suspension of the ban on travel to Cuba. It is the United States government that bans travel to Cuba, but all this is being weakened. Will it reach half a century? That blockade against Iraq wasn't as harsh as that against Cuba. At some point it was able to sell fuel.

7 Referring to the so-called Gulf War, in 1991, triggered by the occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi troops.

I was explaining that we feel we have the moral standing to condemn this war. Ninety-one percent of Spaniards condemned the war against Iraq. Consider that Spain, rather, had historical relations with the Arabs; consider that the Spanish language has many words that come from Arab! Why this fury? This gentleman has turned into a bootlicker of the United States. Some call him "the Spanish Celestina," with this business of going around seeking Latin American youths to go there to kill, to back the occupation of Iraq. It should be discussed whether the Celestina should continue. What is the Spanish Celestina up to, recruiting young men to spill their blood in an unjust war of conquest? I'm extremely grateful, but I'd be more grateful if they realized that it is time for Latin American countries not to move around with Spanish-Portuguese baby walkers. They belong to the same honored institution as we do: the Ibero-American Summit. Although we are the only undemocratic country in the hemisphere. They want to question Chávez, but they still grant us the great honor of being the only undemocratic one. But that is what democracy is! Cuba was conquered with twelve horses. Thank goodness they didn't get as far as India. If Columbus had been right they would have got there with the twelve ponies. First they called us Indians by mistake; then came another one and called us Americans; then came our friends from the north and took that "Americans" bit away from us. The neighbors up north are the Americans everywhere; we aren't. I would be content if they would call us inhabitants of the planet Earth; ultimately that's what we will end up being first of all.

Here there has been no talk about ecology and I don't know what new world you are going to build if the inhabitants of the planet disappear. There is another thing that isn't mentioned and it is the unequal terms of exchange. It seems that academicians cannot speak of certain things. Today the price of coffee is an infinitesimal fraction of what it was. What our country produces has been replaced through science and technology. Perhaps Latin Americans have contributed to this development. Nobody is going to protest against the development of science, technology, production. But what they produce they sell to us at higher prices and what we produce they buy from us ever more cheaply. Trade agreements: the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is the latest fashionable word; before it was the FTA. And they had created the WTO, which has evolved enormously. It has turned into one of the main sacking instruments. Those who hold 90% of the world's patents already want to double the number

of years that the patent remains in force. That is the brilliant future that awaits us. Of course it's worth giving one's life for that imperialism, for that democracy!

Venezuela was robbed and I have no problem with saying so: I am a brother of the Bolivarian movement. I am ready to give my life for the Bolivarian movement. Although I respect opinion. Very often one doesn't know or doesn't have all the factors for evaluation available. I recall that in the last forty years in Venezuela, under those super-democratic governments, independently of what they stole, capital flight totaled around 300 billion dollars. You must surely be thinking of today's dollars. But it's the dollars of before, which were worth much more. This car costs 10,000 dollars; the ton of wheat stood at 186. U.S. wheat is not of bad quality. I am not speaking of other wheat that is sold to us. I don't want to give adverse publicity to anyone; at least for the time being I won't speak. Especially about some products from very humanitarian countries that have taken humanitarian aid away from us. It's a miracle we're alive. Humanitarian aid: four million per year over the last four years, on average. Well, one sometimes accepts humanitarian aid out of courtesy. There are other times when one accepts it with real gratitude, even if it is worth one cent. But some European humanitarian assistance, I say in all honesty, can only be received out of courtesy. Because humanitarian aid and hypocrisy are irreconcilable at least in the feelings of a revolutionary. How much did they buy from us? Around 1.5 billion dollars: raw materials, which might be nickel, tobacco; no longer sugar because they had already ruined the country with their subsidies. An elementary calculation of the earnings they can make selling to Cuba for 1.5 billion dollars: I get around 400 million dollars. They sell much more expensively to it, they charge it higher interest. If there is a credit it is much more expensive. All the arts are known on how to earn money; let us call it delicately, so as not to use the word "steal" money, so as not to say "pillaging" of countries. They give us a million dollars (in humanitarian aid) for every 100 million in profit. The blockade also helps there. You buy and pay this amount, or I don't sell it to you. I give you a credit and you pay usurious interest, or I don't give it to you. Many developed countries with those democracies have benefited from the blockade.

I was referring to whether they gave or didn't give. It is we who are giving humanitarian assistance to you. We also demonstrate to you how much we have helped the countries of the Third World. We have 8,000 medical students from countries of Latin America, the Caribbean

and other places. How many of our doctors go to Africa? And where there isn't a medical school, they organize one. And all this is done for free. At our universities there are 15,000 students on scholarships. If you work out how much a study course costs at a U.S. university, especially at a medical school, the result of the cooperation in human value that we can produce is of around 400 or 500 million dollars. Investing in human capital, we can help in very high amounts. It is the aid that this blockaded country provides to the countries of the Third World. This aid is gradually transformed into technological assistance. We have developed a great program for teaching how to read and write over the radio and we have given it to several countries. We have developed other highly important things in educational matters. Our cooperation with the countries of Central America, Haiti... Our country serves 75% of the Haitian population. Cuban physicians have reduced child mortality in the areas where they work in Guatemala from 42 to 6%. We could work out how many tens of thousands of lives were saved. And we would be wrong because we could measure them in hundreds of thousands of lives saved. The number of fellow countrymen who are providing services in the field of health is higher than ever. The country was left with 3,000 doctors of the 6,000 it had when the revolution won. The doors were opened. The neighbors up North wanted to take our doctors away from us. That empire which has moments in which it is tougher and others when it is less tough; it depends on personalities, on different factors. And that's because everything evolves. But everything evolves in favor of greater power, of a greater capacity to cause harm, political evolution, scientific evolution, the disappearance of the other power, in sum. This was over forty years ago. Thousands of doctors weren't ready, when the revolution triumphed, to go up into the mountains, to go to the countryside. That's because it was really necessary to come from a higher class to get a high-school diploma and to study medicine at the only medical school there was. Today the country has 84 medical schools. The moment came when we graduated 80,000 from high school per year and 6,000 medical students graduated. Today our country has at least twenty times as many university graduates as when the revolution won. And we advance in the search of a comprehensive general culture, toward the massification of college education. It is the fate of a generation that we are discussing. How does a man who is in the fourth grade choose between one government program and another? It is evident that what ends up being predominant is a political machinery, money, propaganda. How is one

to explain that democracy can be spoken of when everybody knows that the most important thing in a United States election campaign is money? Everybody knows that the current president had a record amount of campaign money. Everybody knows that the large oil companies had given the largest amount of money they had ever contributed to the election campaign. Everybody knows that despite everything that was written by the Encyclopedists and what the U.S. Constitution says, in the 1800s slavery persisted. One would have to explain what kind of democracy that was. I'd be ready to discuss whether democracy exists in the United States today. It was in 1861, no less, that that bloody war began and slavery formally ended⁸. I would ask what democracy U.S. blacks enjoyed. And today I ask: what democracy is there in the ghettos? I believe that ignorance, in this period more than in any other, is the fundamental instrument of a, let's say, mental order, if not of an economic order or instrument of power. I won't say that in the Roman era education was a fundamental element. One should see how many citizens could read and write. It was a system of domination via force. I ask myself: how can a citizen think in this ill-named civilization? In this world, a trillion dollars are invested in commercial advertising per year. Commercial advertising forms an important part of the GDP. The man of the tribe, of the clan, decided if he could kill a boar or a deer. Not today. Today you are told what meat you have to cook, if it is hog or boar meat. What clothes you must wear. In tribal days people thought, although they knew very little; today people are subjected to levels of advertising that cancel thinking. For what other reasons are a trillion dollars spent on commercial advertising? See what a democratic civilization! See what absolute freedom! The exercise of intelligence is suppressed. Because they can exert dominance through ignorance. We have been talking here about the subject of the FTAA. I have given long speeches about the need to shape consciousness. The battle of ideas, almost everybody is admitting, is a question of shaping consciousness.

⁸ This refers to the U.S. Civil War, 1861-1865, in which the pro-slavery and separatist South was defeated by the Northern states.

Imperialism, the FTAA and Latin America

When military technology is talked about, the great power enjoys an immense superiority. When it arrives, it invades and conquers the territory. But it is unable to administer it. You know that we have been regarded by the United States as a terrorist country. I have met a series of administrators, officials. I have met James Carter, and independently of the points of view that I did not share I must admit he is a man of culture. Bill Clinton is a man of culture. I said that Roosevelt was a statesman. But some others boasted of only having read two books in their life!

Someone mentioned here the pretexts for an invasion of Cuba. Fifteen pretexts had already been drawn up and had been approved. That was what gave rise to the risks of a nuclear war. Among those pretexts was that of seeking the way to reach a passenger plane: they are around there and are easy to find. Because they accused us, on account of the bringing down of a plane, of I don't know how many violations. The number of times they violated our airspace! I don't know what would happen if one sent a plane to fly over Miami, or Washington, or New York and they told it to stop and it didn't. It would be interesting to ask anyone what the United States would do if a Cuban plane did that. It wouldn't last even five minutes. The Torricelli law came, the Helms-Burton law, and the blockade was tightened much more to try to strangle the country. The truth about the United States is seldom known. Accusing the country of being terrorist! Why? Because it felt like it. Consider that thousands of Cubans have died. The plane with young people that they exploded; they killed the entire fencing team. And it was done by someone who was living in Miami. That place is full of terrorists –proven. With regard to the May 20 speech they gave us the order to renounce socialism. There you are. At a commemorative ceremony that gathered millions of real people. Because it is said out there that 20,000 people gathered and it isn't true. I say that in Cuba's smallest township many more people gather than do for the presidential campaigns of many United States candidates who obtain victory. Because those democracies don't draw anyone. Only on the basis of ignorance can that picture be painted. Why don't they carry out a plebiscite? I see it ever more unlikely, because people are already in the know. The fact that 91% are opposed to the plans of the Celestina is already a lot. A very recent fact, I don't remember the exact date: the vast majority of Latin Americans are

learning to discuss what an unjust war is, a measly movie and cheap propaganda. Now there is a movement against the FTAA that is growing with your efforts and those of the forces of the left, but three years ago it wouldn't have been impossible for them to impose the FTAA through a plebiscite and to tell fifty tales regarding the great virtues, the wealth they would have, the employment, the exports index. A hundred billion produced by the *maquiladoras*! What percentage had Mexican components? I believe that 5 or 6% of the components of those exports were Mexican, and only 18% of the components of the other industries that exported to the United States were Mexican. Today the remittances or the money from the remittances that arrive in Mexico from the United States reaches 14 billion dollars. The greatest income in hard currency of an oil-producing country are the remittances. Although oil has maintained its price, which is above 30 and on occasions up to 35 dollars per barrel. And now one knows about the unemployment figure which rises. The number of jobs that are lost each month and each year. The agreements were opposed by some –a minority. Mexicans didn't know what the FTAA was, what the FTA was. And among Mexicans there is a certain level of education, because the revolution built many schools and took a series of very positive steps. It was a true social revolution in its time. Before the Mexican revolution the tremendous poverty led to the explosion of the revolution. Such as Bolivia's poverty leads to today. I remember that when the uprising took place the miners used dynamite and they even defeated the forces of repression⁹. In Cuba the MNR triggered a lot of enthusiasm. I don't want to be presented as an agitator. Nor as a partner. I am not your partner, Evo. I am your brother.

I said at one point that in 1959 Latin America owed 5 billion. Today it owes 750 billion. We fought major battles over this debt business. Here there were a great many meetings of students, of unions, of women, of intellectuals, of political personalities. It is known how much is owed, the problems are known, it is known that happened with Argentina, it is also known that in Brazil the 40 billion dollars produced by the privatizations were lost in six weeks seeking money to maintain the parity between the real and the dollar. They employed certain mechanisms and created a currency with parity. By creating a curren-

9 An allusion to the Bolivian Revolution of April 9, 1952. The alliance between the miners and peasants caused the toppling of oligarchic power and the triumph of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR).

cy with parity this determined the end of the election campaign, with a violent crisis preceded by that of Southeast Asia. There the others injected around 80 billion dollars because that crisis wasn't convenient for them any more. That crisis had been extremely serious and they provided help. But the fact is that everything that was contributed by the privatization lasted barely six weeks. It was just before an election campaign and in such circumstances there are certain criteria. If you owe your political strength to the fact of having annihilated inflation and having placed the currency on a par you would have to be truly someone committed to renounce all interests to proceed to do what should have been done: devalue that currency. The crisis aided the triumph of Lula and of the progressive forces. But in what condition did they leave him the country! Nobody knows it exactly, but some calculations put Brazil's foreign debt at between 250 and 300 billion dollars. As much as all of Latin America owed, and that doesn't count the domestic debt. A social situation that demands an urgent solution. Nobody can ask Lula today to speak of the foreign debt. That was his struggle, but they left him such conditions that it is impossible to talk about the foreign debt there save within specific parameters. Before Lula left the opposition the IMF acted and lent 30 billion dollars and only 5 billion had been used. They left 25 billion. The reserve has the Brazilian government well handcuffed. I won't rush to condemn the Brazilian government. It is too soon. The situation is very difficult. He has the commitment to hunger zero. It is a country that has many resources. I believe it is a country that can do things. One cannot ask it to incinerate itself. This is how I think. One has to take into account the conditions it is in and to give it a bit of time. When we began the revolution there was a lot that we didn't know. Yes: these are always very delicate subjects. I think that in two years' time Brazil will be self-sufficient in fuel. They have found major natural gas fields. The dependence generated by fuel imports is a big bill. I think it is a country that can be self-sufficient even up to 80 or 90%. I would even be laughing at a possible blockade. Self-sufficient in fuel! With an industry that has a certain degree of development, that produced 100 million tons of food, soybeans, beef, etc. They have the food resources. It even manufactures certain equipment. I don't see that this process could fail. Yesterday a cable by a miracle stopped short of saying he was promoting armed struggle! I am not speaking about a rifle, or about a bullet. When I speak about weapons I speak of those that we have. We –without straying from our doctrine of struggle, which must encompass dialectics.

Without straying either, even one minute, from knowledge of the weapons in the possession of the potential invader, of a people brought up in the doctrine of war; all the people know that this country couldn't be dominated –it could be attacked. But to reach the extreme of what they attempted to do in Iraq... we have no wish. They make a mistake and suffer the consequences. I was recently talking to someone and said that however extraordinary they may be, weapons serve for specific types of actions, in specific types of wars, and then afterwards they can put them all away because they won't be of any use. An enormous arsenal of weapons isn't enough. Also necessary is an enormous printing plant producing green bills every day. There is no economy that resists that, and that one least of all. They have already over-abused the privilege of being the issuers of all the currencies in the world, the privilege of storing the money of all the central banks, of storing the money earned by anybody who sells oil. The United States economy has, among other things already mentioned, the privilege of having everything, of having the money of all the countries of the world. Like Japan, which has an amount of treasury bonds in its power. From the economic point of view there appear risks that threaten that economy. There are the fiscal deficits. There are the budget deficits, which this year will surpass 400 billion dollars. There are some surveys that point out that U.S. public opinion is today more worried about economic problems than about the problems of the war itself. Changes are taking place. Criticism appears. Polls appear. One must recognize the great merit of a group of U.S. intellectuals who have been pointing all this out. They are not harming their people; they are fighting a battle for the welfare of the United States people, whose interests have no reason to be divorced from the interests of the rest of humanity.

It is a question of the system. It is the product of a historical evolution, of a social type. Don't forget that all evolutions have acted to the detriment of human beings, of their prerogatives, of their rights, of their freedoms. Today, of their survival. Five thousand years ago, there didn't exist nuclear weapons, there didn't exist the threats or the dangers that Chomsky spoke about; less than sixty years ago, the first nuclear weapon exploded, and since that time this great danger of extermination has existed. But 35 years ago this other deadly danger was unknown: the environment wasn't talked about. It seemed the only danger of extermination could come from a nuclear war. The population of the world has more than doubled since the victory of the

revolution. A researcher complained that there was no African representative at the table. And his complaint was correct. The thing is that for this developed world Africa does not exist. There, 40% of people in fertile age have the AIDS infection. We have doctors there. All of sub-Saharan Africa has 50,000 doctors, mainly white. For the 500 million inhabitants. Not long ago I was at a meeting on racism and was able to find out the facts. Now the United States government, after the war and surely conscious of the terrible impact, remembered there is AIDS in Africa; the proposal was made and 15 billion dollars allocated to fight AIDS. I am exceedingly pleased: if we had made an offer to the United Nations, we would have offered it a number of doctors to fight AIDS. I am going to say something. I must say it. There are missionaries and saints; I won't deny it. But I know what happens in the field of medicine: neither Europe nor the United States together, those countries that are so democratic and developed but so lacking in the values of solidarity, put together a sufficient number of doctors to replace the Cuban doctors who are there, or in Guatemala. They don't put together five hundred doctors. No human capital was created, no values were shaped, no programs were designed to shape people with solidarity, capable of going anywhere, however tough it might be. When the Nicaraguans asked us for a thousand doctors we asked for volunteers. Already in 1979 the conscience of our country had been developing. Thirty thousand came forward; they knew they would have to walk, to ride on horseback. The doctor takes a lot of liking to the families. When a doctor of ours is two years on one of those stints and says goodbye, there are tears on the part of the family and of the doctor. Two thousand were sent. They didn't need more. Months later two or three were murdered, as the did with the alphabetizers. And what happened? A document was received with the signature of 100,000 who offered to go there. Well, that is already the fruit of a consciousness, the fruit of a political culture, of a knowledge of the things that happen in the world, of a given value that has been rooted and of a consciousness that has been shaped. And that happened massively in this country; I don't know if in others it's like that. It is the people who are ready to defend their fatherland. Here the character of the intellectual worker is massified.

Well, I say that the country can recruit hundreds of thousands of technicians and professional people. I am not exaggerating. The West and its democratic industrial societies enjoy abundant financial capital but are ruined as regards human capital. Their mass media

don't work to create a consciousness, they don't work to spread culture and knowledge. One of the most terrible things about this system that I criticize is that in those societies one finds the increasing phenomenon that the human being is superfluous. Germany is the most industrialized country in Europe. There constantly appear new machines that save jobs all over. Cuba isn't Germany. We are conscious of the fact that we campaign against tobacco. We cannot attain such a pure conception as to say we won't sell any more tobacco because it is harmful. It is one of the country's sources of income. But we try to campaign against the temptation to consume any drug, alcohol, even cigars. Nobody bothers to talk about self-esteem, that tremendous force, that need of the human being. Because I said, what can be the self-esteem of an illiterate person, what can be the self-esteem of someone who is jobless? Today whoever loses employment at 45 loses his health, loses his self-esteem. There are people who commit suicide simply because they have the impression they are no longer good for anything. We have managed to reach less than 3% unemployment in Cuba. Technically "full employment." Meanwhile, the U.S. people have high unemployment and no reaction is generated in the face of certain economic advances. What has risen in the United States is the productivity of labor: many fewer people are producing more. But the unemployment rate is not diminishing. The last news I saw was that the request for subsidies had been of 350,000. Between June and September it had grown 7%. No society in which the human being is superfluous can be a fair society, can be a democratic society. They are incompatible things.

I would recommend a study to look into the value of the dollar forty years ago, in purchasing power, and to compare it with the current purchasing power. Then the oligarchy about which President Chávez has spoken takes away a trillion dollars –legitimately obtained and illegitimately obtained, because one must add a judgement factor. There is talk of hot money, there is talk of financial corporations whose business is to make short-term deposits; their business is to multiply money via the interest paid to them for the loan of the deposit; this is called hot money. It must be pointed out that in the face of the imposed economic order, of the IMF's laws, of the increasing chasm between rich and poor despite what has been promised for fifty years to those same poor whose population increases, there is an increase in the power of a million in patents, capital, technology, scientific research centers, and it is reinforced by the institutions. What

money from a Latin American country, be it Mexican or Brazilian or Bolivian or Argentina, can stop devaluing? If it is considered that all accumulated citizen money of any Latin American country, legitimately or illegitimately acquired, is hot money! What they have isn't gold. What they have is paper, with supposed values that change every day. It is devalued, but not on account of the causes by which the dollar or pound sterling are devalued, because of crisis, because of war, although this does not hinder the pillaging. The value of the currency of the rich countries is devalued systematically and, despite this, the accumulation of wealth increases constantly. This occurs this way with billions of inhabitants who live in the world, for other reasons. I have mentioned one: unequal terms of exchange. That is how millions of dollars have left the Third World. Not only do they pay more cheaply for its product; not only do they charge more expensively for their patents: it's that the money, because of a natural law, must depart. Humanity has always had some little problems with currencies. But the alchemists' prodigy of turning paper into gold is one of the most important technological advances attained by the United States.

When the Second World War ended, the United States, which had entered the war because of the Japanese attack, hadn't lost one screw in that war. Europe destroyed, France destroyed, Germany destroyed, the USSR destroyed. Japan destroyed and with the gift of two nuclear bombs dropped unnecessarily. It was an evident act of terror. They could have organized a battlefield in a place where they had a military base and it would have been more than sufficient. It was an act of terror that preceded the Cold War. After seeing a few tanks here and there one understands that it is a great lie to say that what defined the Soviet victory (after committing I don't know how many military mistakes) was the aid it received from the West. When the war began, in fact, Soviet tanks were superior and had a better caliber. The mistrust and the errors of the person leading the Soviet Union are one of those subjective factors of which I am thinking when I say that men's conduct causes the march of events to be held back. When the Soviets, having complied with their commitments, launched the attack through Manchuria, a few days later history heard the news of the launching of those nuclear weapons. The unnecessary launching of those weapons. How many nuclear weapons are there? Even the international organizations pulled weapons from their pockets –it's isn't known where they have them. That non-proliferation program only serves for a few who have the monopoly to have ever more sophisticated weapons and the

others, if they so much as manufacture one, are invaded, unless they are an ally of the United States, as happened in the Middle East in the case of Israel. The data are known. Once I posed a question in Rio de Janeiro criticizing the arguments they offered when they proclaimed NATO's new military doctrine and its right to act outside the borders of Europe in the Euro-Atlantic area. And I asked them if the Latin American countries gathered there were or nor in the Euro-Atlantic area. It was agreed that the question would be answered at a private meeting. The meeting ended and they didn't answer anything. Afterwards there was a dinner; they were already dining. The Italian was there. I was laughing to myself because they hadn't answered and he said to me, "Fidel: the answer is 'no'." As if saying that they are not included. I posed another question in the case of Israel: the solution in their judgement was a military intervention by NATO. They are going to unleash a nuclear war complying with the Euro-Atlantic doctrine against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and they are going to kill Palestinians, Jews and whoever is there. When Korea spoke of a nuclear weapon the world shuddered, and threats were issued against Korea and whoever speaks up.

International unfairness

There is nothing fair about this world. It is unfair, unequal, arbitrary; ours is a subjected and exploited world. On proclaiming on September 20th 2001, that whoever did not back his project for a war against terrorism would be considered a terrorist and be exposed to U.S. attacks, President Bush openly ignored the United Nations' prerogative and, by virtue of the US's military power, took on the role of master and policeman of the world. In a recent speech he gave on the 200th anniversary of the West Point military academy –well known for its major role in United States military history– Mr. George W. Bush spoke fiery words to the nine hundred and ninety-eight graduating cadets. He also spoke there to the United States and to the rest of the world. He said that "if the U.S. waits for threats to fully materialize, it will have waited too long. In the world which has been entered into, he said, the only path to security is the path of action, and his nation would act. US security, he told the cadets, would require the military strength that they would lead. It was a strength, he said, that had to be ready to attack immediately in any dark cor-

ner of the world". Please, let nobody try to turn off the light in this room. "And U.S. security", he added, "would require being ready for preventive attacks when necessary to defend U.S. freedom and U.S. lives". He stated that "terrorist cells had to be discovered in sixty or more countries; ...along with our friends and allies, the U.S. must oppose proliferation and face the regimes that sponsor terrorism as each case dictated. The U.S. would send diplomats wherever necessary, and would send our soldiers wherever necessary; the security of the United States and the peace of the planet would not be left at the mercy of a handful of terrorists, tyrants and madmen". I believe we fall into both categories.

Bush added that "the U.S. would eliminate the dark threat to that country and to the world. Some, were upset by his not being very diplomatic, or being discourteous". Quite some discourtesy! Speaking in terms of good and evil! I am not in agreement! It is, Bush said, "a conflict between good and evil, and the U.S. would call evil by its name; when facing off against evil and anarchic regimes, the U.S. was not creating a problem but solving one, and the U.S. would lead the world in the struggle against the problem". In his speech, there isn't a single mention of the United Nations, nor one phrase referring to peoples' right to security and peace, or to the need for a world ruled by norms and principles. There is only talk of alliances between powers and of war, and war in the name of peace and freedom, words which in his mouth sound mendacious and empty like soap bubbles. What would Roosevelt have said if he had heard a speech like that one? Hitler never made such categorical, such precise threats as these. Sixty or more: the question was, what might "or more" mean? Soon afterwards, the answer came from Washington. One of the Chambers of Congress proposed an agreement that if the International Criminal Tribunal punished some United States serviceman... the United States would attack Holland! I found the answer to the query. "Or more countries" means "all countries other than the United States."

Latin America's hour

I would like to recall what I said on May 1st and then what I said when the high-school year began. And not because it was I who said it, but because it is all I have. And lastly the speech I gave on September 1st on desertification. This subject which I say is a very serious problem.

I also pose the way to teach to read and write with some methods which are already being employed. Not for Cuban children because 100% of Cuban children reach the sixth grade; 99.5% reach the ninth grade. We have located all youths between 17 and 30 years of age who haven't studied or worked for diverse reasons, and who unfortunately are the quarry for crime. And we have them studying, we invite them to study, we give them some economic assistance and this has had a tremendous reception. This began in 2001 and this year (2003) 30,000 entered university. The country has 15,000 social workers, four training schools. The amount of things that can be done with few resources! I am not proposing, look, Evo, organize a revolution there, set up a socialist system, call it that if you like, or you can use the old terminology that spoke of a stage of national liberation. You recall that things were divided into stages. That's because we were very backward, we were very schematic. Don't tell me you are going to solve the stage of absolute ignorance in matters of state and practical economics with academic knowledge. We know extremely brilliant academicians but there are few academicians who can organize a government. Because they become distracted, and are steeped in theory. It's not that they are unable. The only intellectual I know about who was capable of organizing something was Martí. He was an intellectual, a writer, essayist, poet, a genius. He also organized a party and organized a war. An intellectual generally isn't an organizer. Well, theory is important and decisive. I know about the repercussions of what has happened here. It's not that I am simply flattering you. It isn't your merit or ours: it's that consciousness has been maturing, it's that the masses have gradually acquired it, it's that new forms of organization have appeared. There will be a task ahead in the field of defining things. I have said no two revolutions are alike. It would mean diminishing the imagination and intelligence of man to think that two political processes will be the same. Each one will always contribute something, but it is man who must achieve the synthesis. I say that it is not an option. You have no other alternative than to solve the problems, since this situation is unsustainable. We all know history. I know that French revolutionaries, in the name of democracy, imitated Roman institutions. It wasn't known at that time that there was a great struggle between patricians and plebeians and that Julius Caesar was assassinated by the oligarchy.

I was talking about some books I have read. Well, some further remarks, and then it would be better to start wrapping up. I have

abused your patience and apologize deeply. I mean it sincerely. You are knowledgeable people. This is the most interesting meeting of all those in which I have participated in all these years of revolution. We have had the luck to have the knowledge: eminent people came, we all know; eminent U.S. professors have come. I have said some things during my speech. I beg some of those people not to think that I am answering anyone in particular. On the contrary; one must speak expressing what one believes but hasn't the slightest interest in being discourteous or in leaving an impression of discourtesy. I respect each person's thinking. I thank you for the different points of view. We don't gain anything if all those who have the same criterion were to meet here. Here we have many opinions, criteria, nuances. There is a whole current of concern which I have never seen before, of progress, which corresponds to the real fact that the world has reached this point and that the situation demands changes. There are indeed powerful people. Argentina and Brazil are holding discussions with the IMF. Argentina is discussing more than anyone. Two of the most powerful countries at this time are called Argentina and Brazil. They have in their hands the power of the debt of approximately half a trillion dollars. In this they can be more powerful than the IMF, more powerful than the Eight all together. And nobody can raise a dagger to make them pay, to keep the schools without funds, hospitals without funds, unemployment at 18-20%; nobody can raise a dagger.

I don't believe that leaders make history: the subjective factor is influential as a plus or as a minus; they accelerate or delay. Besides, I don't believe in geniuses or in specially gifted people. I have the criterion that society –and our species– are full of geniuses. While here we have extremely brilliant ones, more brilliant than Martí impossible. If all personalities in history are analyzed we shall discover that they have arisen each time a crisis came. Then the leaders appear. Napoleon –who would have heard about him without the French Revolution? In all periods of history these leaders have emerged when a crisis has come. If Evo had been born at the time when the MNR staged that coup, in 1952, nobody would know who Evo is. So everything is relative. Each person interprets things in one way or another. I say that this is the hour of Latin America. It will depend on the people. If Brazil and Argentina wish it –I am not advising it, I am giving an opinion– they could give the IMF orders, because they have the nuclear weapon of half a trillion dollars, the capacity for self-sufficiency in food and in energy, I am saying in all senses, and a level of

trade and cultural development. They can give the IMF orders. The debts have already become so large they are reaching the critical point. The critical point was mentioned when talking about nuclear weapons. And it was said that when “x” amount of enriched uranium of such a quality is put together with another, equal mass of enriched uranium of the same quality, critical mass is achieved. The little point at which chain reaction occurs. The IMF is over if two nations do the same thing. Because the rest will do the same. Yes, that’s how things are. The point is being reached in which this situation is unsustainable. Will the United States economy manage to rouse itself under the current conditions of the world economy, and of the problems of the U.S. itself? I doubt it. It may be able to do so for a short time. But each time, the timespans are shorter. Having solved one little part doesn’t solve anything. There will be ever more hungry people, ever more poverty, ever more discontent, ever more rebellion. And this does not involve weapons. In Argentina nobody fired a shot, and when they froze the money the government fell. They blew a little, that’s all. If one can blow a lot, so much the better. When these circumstances occur, in Bolivia they can no longer employ the methods that were used by the military dictatorships. They tried to do the same to us. How much did that adventure cost them? That kind of Bay of Pigs in Guatemala. I am going to speak of human beings: 200,000 dead. It could have happened to us if they had managed to land and send OAS troops to establish democracy. That would have happened, two and a half years after the revolution. Many revolutionary measures had already been adopted: all ill-gotten gains had already been confiscated, we had adopted a series of laws that had had an enormous impact on the people. In Cuba the immense majority of the people sides with the revolution; it isn’t known how much it would have cost. In Guatemala 200,000 dead, and of these 100,000 have disappeared. How little is spoken of those who monitored that revolutionary movement. The lives, the blood it cost, the suffering of that people. In Guatemala the category of prisoner did not exist. They were dead or had disappeared. They cannot solve it as in Argentina, nor as they did with Pinochet. They no longer can. They can no longer smash civil resistance with tanks and machineguns, massacring thousands of people, murdering, causing disappearances. I won’t discuss whether they were 10,000 or 30,000. Ten thousand is already an inconceivable number –and the way they did it. And what happened in Chile. And what happened in El Salvador. It is known; it has been studied. It seems as if none of this

had happened in the last thirty years. And the pillaging. How can the system that I mentioned, and that produces capital flight in colossal amounts, maintain itself? It is indefensible. Isn't this imperialism? The latter has exhausted all the atrocities it could commit, but that doesn't mean it will disappear tomorrow. What will happen with globalization tomorrow? Will this democracy –which has just received a tremendous moral blow when they forced it to approve the proposal of converting the occupation of Iraq as a function of the United Nations, without any guarantees, nor any promises, and under the leadership of the United States government– be the only thing we can achieve? It was said here by one of the panelists and one who has given one of the speeches with very harsh words for what has happened with the United Nations¹⁰. We shall see what happens. It is no longer the veto right exercised by the great power. It inclines reverently. As regards world public opinion, people in the United States, Spaniards and, I am sure, the majority of Europeans, of Russians –it was the happiest moment of their life when the resolution was approved, that the Russians, copying the doctrine of the government of the United States, had decided to abandon the agreement on the use of space for military purposes. That is the situation. Nobody can sustain this. I start off with that conviction. For a long time now, at many of the meetings we have had here there has been talk of all these things. Stock exchanges rose so high –a phenomenon that hadn't happened even in 1929– that there were stocks of high-technology industries that, in an extremely brief period, rose from one million to 800 million dollars. They rose 800 times. We asked ourselves and searched in books for the various theories on where that money comes from. Many things have been mentioned here, casino economy... I think one must go deeper into all these phenomena. We have the duty to find out what will happen. And we have the duty to defend ourselves against two enormous dangers: one of them of an economic, social and political order, and another of a macro-natural order. I say goodbye to you in the hope that your great-great-grandchildren will be able to arrive at a year 2100 in which intelligence, education and culture prevail over instincts. Up to now, society has done nothing else than cultivate instinct. The better world that everyone talks about must be the fruit of the battle of education, culture, intelligence and the values it has created against the instincts that we inherit from nature. Optimist is the name I give to someone

10 See the article by Perry Anderson in this same book.

who believes that what the evolution of our species gave us in gray matter will prevail over the biological laws that nature gave us. This, without putting the blame on anyone save us. We thank everybody, principally those who, to participate in this gathering, to which they have given a lot of life with their points of view, had to overcome great obstacles. I won't say, Fatherland or Death. I will say: may humanity be saved.