

THE GEOPOLITICS OF THE NEW COLLECTIVE IMPERIALISM OF THE TRIAD : THE MIDDLE EAST, THE EUROPEAN UNION, AND UNITED STATES IMPERIALISM

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The importance of the Middle East in the global imperialist strategies of the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) is inscribed in a general historical interpretation of the capitalist expansion that I have developed elsewhere (Amin, 1981, 1989, 2001). According to this interpretation, capitalism has always been, since its inception, a polarising system by nature, i.e., imperialistic. This polarisation, the concomitant construction of dominant centres and dominated peripheries and the intensification of their reproduction, is immanent in the process of capital accumulation on a global scale, founded on what I have called 'the law of globalised value'.

In this theory of global capitalist expansion, the qualitative transformations of the systems of accumulation from one historical phase to another shape, in turn, the successive forms of asymmetric centre-periphery polarisation, i.e. of concrete imperialism. The contemporary world system will thus remain imperialist (polarising) insofar as the fundamental logic of its deployment remains dominated by capitalist production relations. This theory thus associates imperialism with the process of capital accumulation on a worldwide scale, which I consider as constituting only one reality whose various dimensions are in fact not dissociable. Thus it differs as much from the vulgarised version of Lenin's theory of imperialism as 'the highest phase of capitalism' (as if former phases of global capitalist expansion had not been polarising) as from contemporary post-modern theories that describe the new globalisation as 'post-imperialist' (Amin 1997, 2004).

In its globalised deployment, imperialism was always conjugated in the plural, since its inception (in the 16th century) until 1945. The conflict of imperial powers, permanent and often violent, has in fact occupied a decisive place in the transformation of the world into an arena of class struggle, through which the fundamental contradictions of capitalism are expressed. Moreover, social struggles and imperial conflicts are closely articulated and it is this articulation that determines the course of really existing capitalism. In this respect, my analysis differs vastly from the theory of 'hegemonic succession' primarily and essentially because it is Eurocentric in the sense that it considers that the transformations operating at the heart of the system, in its centres, command the global evolution of the system in a decisive and almost exclusive manner (Amin, 1996). The reactions of peoples in the peripheries to the imperialist powers should not be underestimated. One cannot account for the history of world capitalism without considering how the independence of the Americas, the great revolutions made in the name of socialism (Russia, China), and the re-conquest of independence by the Asian and African countries imposed major shifts even on the centres of capitalism themselves. The history of imperialism has also been made more through the conflict of imperialist powers than by the type of order that successive hegemonies have imposed. The apparent periods of hegemony have always been extremely short and very relative.

FROM INTER-IMPERIAL CONFLICT TO COLLECTIVE IMPERIALISM

Given this theoretical premise, the Second World War should be interpreted as eventuating in a major transformation with regard to the forms of imperialism: the

multiplicity of imperialism in permanent conflict was substituted by a collective form of imperialism, combining the centres of the world capitalist system (simply put, the 'triad': the US and its external Canadian province, the EU, and Japan). This new form of imperialist expansion went through various phases of development, but has persisted to the present. The hegemonic role of the US must be located within this perspective.

The US drew a gigantic benefit from the Second World War, which had ruined its principal combatants - Europe, the Soviet Union, China and Japan. It was thus in a position to exert economic hegemony, since it concentrated within itself more than half of the global industrial production and specialised in new technologies that would shape the development of the second half of the 20th century. In addition, they possessed a specialised in nuclear weapons manufacture - the new 'ultimate' weapon. This is why I situate the war's end not at Yalta, as often told¹, but at Potsdam, a few days before the bombardment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At Potsdam, the tone of the American delegation became more belligerent, so that the decision to engage in what was going to be the "cold war" was made by then.

This double absolute advantage was nevertheless eroded in a relatively short period of time (within two decades), by a double recovery, an economic one for capitalist Europe and Japan, and a military one for the Soviet Union. This relative retreat of US power provided at the time a flowering of the discourse on "American decline", and even an ascent of alternative hegemonies (Europe, Japan, and later China). This is when Gaullism is born. De Gaulle considered the US' post-war objectives to be the control the entire Old World ('Eurasia'). Washington would interpose itself within Europe by stirring the spectre of Soviet 'aggression', which he never found credible. His analysis was, in my opinion, exact, but he was almost alone in seeing matters that way. The counter-strategy that he envisaged, as a counterpoint to the "Atlanticism" promoted by Washington, was founded on Franco-German reconciliation, whose basis was the construction of a "non-American Europe" that carefully excluded Great Britain, which was rightly judged as the Trojan horse of Washington's Atlanticism. A Europe united in this way could then open the way for reconciliation with "(Soviet) Russia". Reconciling and drawing together the three largest European populations - French, German and Russian - would put a definite end to the American project of dominating the world. The internal conflict specific to the European project can thus be summarized as the choice between two alternatives: an Atlantic Europe, the European wing of the American imperial project, or a non-Atlantic Europe, wherein Russia would be integrated. This conflict of strategies is still not resolved, but subsequent developments - the end of Gaullism, Great Britain's admission into the European Community, the Soviet collapse the recent eastward expansion of the EU - have supported what I have called elsewhere "an obliteration of European project" and its "dilution in neo-liberal economic globalisation and in the political-military alignment with Washington" ([Ref. Obsolescent capitalism, pp. 101 and follow](#)). This series of events has reinforced the collective or triadic form of imperialism centred about the project of the elites in the US.

The US ruling class openly proclaims that it will not tolerate the reconstitution of any economic and military power capable of questioning its monopoly of domination over the planet and for this purpose, it has even given itself the right to lead 'preventive wars' (Project for the New American Century, 2000). But this project, far from being the recent fantasy of President Bush Jr. and his extreme right-wing junta, forms part of the US elite's long-term military global strategy since 1945 and that has survived temporary setbacks until the collapse of the USSR. This involves dividing the planet into regions under centralised US

military command. The Middle East features prominently in this scheme (Amin et al., 1992). In essence, it is the extension of the Monroe doctrine to the global scale. This may be seen by some as nothing more than the continuation of imperialist forms witnessed in other epochs (see Chaliand and Blin, 2003); however, such imperialism resulted in the atrocities of World War II and the subsequent establishment of the UN, a supranational institution aiming at preventing precisely those sorts of horrors. But because it contradicts US elite interests, the little progress made on multilateralism has been demolished through the imposition of US national sovereignty over all other countries in ways that are reminiscent of Nazi Germany's relationship to the League of Nations (Amin, 2003a).

THE EU'S ROLE IN THE UNITED STATES' RULING CLASS PROJECT FOR A GLOBAL MONROE DOCTRINE

Western European and Japanese ruling classes complied with this project in the aftermath of World War II as part of a collective imperialistic arrangement for managing North-South relations. There was a sense of urgency in taming national liberation movements in the former colonies (the Bandung era, 1955-1975), which were often aided by China and the USSR, and recovering from the losses incurred by the expansion of the 'socialist world' and the Non-Aligned bloc. The capitulation of the Chinese regime in the 1970s and the collapse of the USSR in the 1980s created the conditions for the fuller expression of the US ruling class' original intentions of global dominance. Aspects of collective imperialism nevertheless persist in the form of economic institutions, such as the WTO, IMF, World Bank, which establish devastating structural adjustment policies largely enforced on the Third World through G-7 governments. Western European and Japanese support for the 1991 Gulf War, interventions and bombing campaigns in Yugoslavia and Central Asia in 2002, and the sidelining of the UN through NATO primacy further exemplifies this alignment with the US. Yet the desertions over the war on and invasion of Iraq in 2003 may be signs of weakening for this collective form of imperialism. These shifts in geopolitical positioning should not be surprising. The above-described global Monroe Doctrine targets three principal potential adversaries: Russia, China, and the Franco-German axis of the EU. Russia's dismemberment, after that of the USSR, constitutes a major strategic objective of the US. The Russian ruling class does not appear to have understood this till now. It seems convinced that after having 'lost the war', it could 'win peace', along the lines of what occurred with Germany and Japan after World War II. It forgets that Washington needed the recovery of these two adversaries precisely in order to face the Soviet challenge. The new conjuncture is different, now that the US has no serious competitor, so that the major strategy is to destroy the ravaged Russian adversary completely. The same strategic objectives are being secondarily applied to China as a result of its expansion and economic success (Amin, 1996). The EU comes third in this vision of global domination. But here the North American establishment does not appear anxious, at least so far. The unconditional Atlanticism of a few (Great Britain, as well as most of the new servile powers of the eastern Europe and some Italian and Spanish elites), the 'quicksand of the European project' (see below), the converging interests of dominant capital of the collective imperialism of the triad, contribute to the effacement of the European project (see Engel-Di Mauro, this volume), which remains a European wing of the US project. Washington's diplomacy has managed to keep Germany on the same trail, while German reunification and the conquest of eastern Europe even seemed to reinforce this alliance. Germany would be encouraged to reclaim its traditional 'thrust towards the east' ('Drang nach Osten')² and be induced to abide by Washington's wishes. Is there a reversal in progress? The German political class appears hesitant and could be divided as far as its

strategic choices are concerned. The alternative to the Atlanticist alignment - which seems to have wind in its sails – calls for a Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis, which could become a solid pillar for a European system independent from Washington.

THE ARTICULATION AND CONTRADICTIONS OF COLLECTIVE IMPERIALISM

Today's world is militarily unipolar. At the same time, some fissures seem to become apparent between the US and some of the European countries with regard to the political management of a global system so far united by the principles of liberalism, in theory at least. Are these fissures only conjunctural and of limited range, or do they imply some lasting changes? To assess the general trajectory, I analyse below the different logics involved in the new phase of collective imperialism (North-South relationships in current parlance) with respect to the specific objectives of the US project.

The processes leading to the rise of collective imperialism

The formation of the new collective imperialism finds its origin in the transformation of the conditions of competition. Only a few decades ago, large firms fought their competing battles essentially over national markets, whether it is the matter of the US' (the largest national market in the world) or even those of the European States (in spite of their modest size, which handicapped them in relation to the US). Firms successful at the national level could be expected to perform well on the world market. Today, the size of the market necessary to gaining the upper hand at the national level necessitates some 500-600 million "potential consumers". The battle must thus be immediately launched and won at the global scale. And those who perform over this market assert then more over their respective national terrains. Thorough internationalisation becomes the primary setting for the activity of large firms. In other words, whereas earlier national power determined global presence today it is the reverse. Therefore transnational firms, whatever their nationality, have common interests in the management of the world market. These interests are superimposed on the permanent and mercantile conflicts, which define all the forms of competition specific to capitalism.

The solidarity among the dominant segments of transnationalised capital from all the partners in the triad is expressed through their rallying behind globalised neo-liberalism. The US is seen from this perspective as the defender (military, if necessary) of "common interests". Nonetheless, Washington does not intend to share equitably in the profits derived from its leadership. The US seeks, on the contrary, to reduce its allies into vassals and is thus only ready to make minor concessions to the junior allies in the Triad. Will this conflict of interests within dominant capital lead to the break-up of the Atlantic alliance? Not impossible, but unlikely.

The US and the world economy

General opinion has it that US military power only constitutes the tip of the iceberg, extending the country's superiority in all areas, notably economic, but even political and cultural. Therefore, submission to the hegemony that it pretends would be impossible to circumvent. Yet in the system of collective imperialism the US does not have a decisive

economic advantage; the US production is far from being the most efficient in the world. On the contrary, almost none of its sectors would be certain of beating competitors in the truly free market dreamt of by liberal economists. The US trade deficit, which increases year by year, went from USD100 billion in 1989 to USD500 billion in 2002. Moreover, this deficit involved practically all areas of the production system. Even the surplus once enjoyed by the US in the area of high technology, which stood at USD35 billion in 1990, has now turned into a deficit. Competition between Ariane rockets and those of NASA, between Airbus and Boeing, testifies to US economic vulnerability. Faced with European and Japanese competition in high-technology products, by Chinese, Korean and other Asian and Latin American industrialised countries in basic manufactured goods, by Europe and the southern cone of Latin America in agriculture, the US probably would not be able to win were it not for its recourse to extra-economic means, violating the principles of liberalism imposed on its competitors! In fact, the US only benefits from comparative advantages in the arms industry precisely because this sector largely operates outside the rules of the market and benefits from state support. This advantage probably brings certain residual benefits to the civil sphere (the Internet being the best-known example), but it also causes serious distortions that handicap many production sectors.

The North American economy lives parasitically and to the detriment of its partners in the world system. As Emmanuel Todd remarks, “The US depends for 10 per cent of its industrial consumption on goods whose import costs are not covered by the exports of its own products” (Todd 2003 page 80). The world produces, while the US (which has practically no national savings) consumes. The ‘advantage’ of the US is that of a predator whose deficit is covered by loans from others, whether consenting or not. The means put in place by Washington to compensate for deficiencies are of various kinds: repeated unilateral violations of liberal principles, arms exports, search for greater profits from oil (which presupposes systematic control over the producers – one of the real reasons for the wars in Central Asia and Iraq). The fact is that the essential part of the American deficit is covered by contributions of capital from Europe, China, Japan and the South (from oil-rich countries and the comprador bourgeoisie of every country in the Third World, the poorest included), to which are added the additional sums brought in from servicing the debt that has been forced on almost all the countries in the periphery of the world system³.

The causes of the weakening of the US production system are complex. They are certainly not conjunctural, and they cannot be corrected through exchange rates, for example, or by putting in place a more favourable balance between salaries and productivity. They are structural. The mediocrity of general education and training systems, and a deep-rooted systematic prejudice favouring private over public service, are some of the main reasons for the profound crisis that US society is going through.

One should therefore be surprised that the EU are actively going about imitating the deficiencies of the US economy. Here, too, the liberal virus does not explain everything, even if it fulfils some useful functions for the system in paralysing the political left. Widespread privatisation and the dismantling of public services will only reduce the comparative advantages that ‘Old Europe’ (as Bush qualifies it) still benefits from. However, whatever damage these things will cause in the long term, such measures offer dominant capital, which lives in the short term, the chance of making additional profits.

Specific objectives of the US project

The hegemonic strategy of the US is within the framework of the new collective Imperialism. Conventional economists do not have the analytical tools enabling them to understand the paramount importance of these objectives. They are heard repeating ad nauseam that in the “new economy” the raw materials coming from the Third World are destined to lose their importance and thus it is becoming more and more marginal in the world system. In contrast to this naïve and hollow discourse, the *Mein Kampf* of the new Washington administration (National Security Strategy of the US, 2002), it is acknowledged that the US works hard for the political right to seize all the natural resources of the planet to meet its consumption priorities. The race for raw materials (especially oil, but other resources, too, water in particular) has already revealed all its virulence. This is all the more so because of the scarcity induced by wasteful western consumption and industrialization in the periphery.

Moreover, a respectable number of countries from the South are destined to become increasingly important industrial producers as much for their internal markets as in the world market. As importers of technologies, of capital, also competitors in exports, they are destined to push down the global economic equilibrium with increasing weight. And it is not a question only of some East Asian countries (like Korea), but of China and, tomorrow, India and the large countries of Latin America. However, far from being a factor of stabilization, the acceleration of capitalist expansion in the South can only be the cause of violent conflicts, internal and international. This is because the expansion cannot absorb the enormous labour reserve concentrated in the periphery. In fact, the peripheries of the system remain highly ‘unstable’. The centres of the capitalist system thus require exerting their domination over the peripheries, to subject their people to the pitiless discipline that the satisfaction of the core’s consumption priorities requires.

In this light, the American establishment has perfectly understood that, in the pursuit of its hegemony, it has three decisive advantages over its EU and Japanese competitors: control over the natural resources of the globe, military monopoly, and cultural predominance, through which capitalist ideology is expressed. The systematic character of these three advantages clarifies many aspects of US policy, in particular the efforts for the military control of the oil-producing Middle East, the offensive strategy with regard to both Korea – taking advantage of this country’s ‘financial crisis’ – and China, the more subtle games aiming at perpetuating divisions within the EU mobilising to this end its unconditional British ally and preventing any serious rapprochement between the EU and Russia. At the level of global resource control, the US has a decisive advantage over the EU and Japan. This is not only because the US is the sole international military power, and thus no strong intervention in the Third World can be led without it, but also because the EU and Japan are themselves being steadily divested of essential resources for their economies. For example, their dependence in the energy sector, in particular their oil dependence with regard to the Gulf, is and will remain for a considerably long time, even if it were to decrease in relative terms. By militarily seizing the control of this region through the Iraq war, the US has demonstrated that they were perfectly conscious of the utility of this strategy with respect to its allied competitors. Not long ago, the USSR had also understood this vulnerability of Europe and Japan; certain Soviet interventions in the Third World had precisely the aim of reminding them of this fact so as to induce them to negotiate on other grounds. Evidently, the deficiencies of Europe and Japan could be compensated through a serious rapprochement

between Russia and the rest of Europe (Gorbachev's 'common home'). This construction of Eurasia is Washington's nightmare.

Conflicts within the Triad

The Triad partners may share common interests in managing the globe through collective imperialism, which is implied in their relationship with the South, but they are certainly no less prone to conflict. The American superpower sustains itself by means of foreign capital. This economic vulnerability is a serious threat to Washington's project of global domination. Given this weakness, the EU in particular, and the rest of the world in general, has two strategic options: to invest their 'surplus' capital in financing US deficits (consumption, investments and military expenditures) or to conserve the surplus and invest it at home⁴. The reason for the occurrence of the former option is that large transnational capital considers the financing of US deficits as a tribute paid for the management of the globalised system US, rather than an investment with a good guaranteed return. This also explains the existence of both 'poor indebted countries', forced into debt servicing at any price, and one 'powerful indebted country', which has the means to devalue its debt when necessary. This investment flow subjects most Europeans to 'deflationary' or, really, stagnationist policies that release a surplus of exportable saving. It makes the EU's already mediocre recovery dependent on artificial economic growth in the US. The alternative strategy for the EU and the rest of the world would result in the simultaneous growth of consumption and investment, particularly in research, technological development, and military expenditure. This option rests on the possibility of the balance of power tipping in favour of the labouring classes.

The geopolitical ramifications of complicity and conflict in the Triad

There are three possible geopolitical consequences resulting from the complicity and competition between the partners in collective imperialism for control over the resources and people in the South. First, the contemporary world system is no less permeated with imperialism than in preceding periods. It is not the post-imperialist Empire that some claim (Hardt and Negri, 2000)⁵. Second, the history of capitalism must be read as globalising from its very beginning, centred on the distinction between various phases of imperialism (understood in terms of centre-periphery relations). Third, internationalisation is not synonymous with the unification of economic systems by market liberalisation. The latter – in its successive historical forms (the freedom of trade yesterday, the freedom of firms today) – always constituted the project of dominant capital. In reality, this project was almost always forced to adjust to demands that are not the concern of its exclusive and specific internal logic. It thus could never be implemented except in some brief historical moments. The free exchange promoted by Great Britain was only effective for two decades (1860-1880) and was succeeded by a century (1880-1980) characterised by inter-imperial conflict and by the de-linking of socialist (from the Russian to the Chinese revolutions) and, more modestly, of populist nationalist countries (the Bandung era of Asia and Africa, 1955-1975). The current moment of reunification of the world market ('free enterprise'), inaugurated by neo-liberalism since the 1980s and extended globally with the Soviet collapse, is probably not destined to experience a better fate. The chaos that it generates testifies to the permanent utopia of capitalism (Amin, 1992a).

THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE IMPERIALIST SYSTEM

The Middle East⁶ occupies a particularly important position in the imperial geopolitical project of the US and therefore also for the EU, as the underwriter of the project. The region owes this position to three factors: its oil wealth, its strategic geopolitical location in the heart of the Old World, and the additional fact that it constitutes the soft underbelly of the world system. Cheap access to oil is vital for the triad's economy; securing political control of the area provides the best means of guaranteeing this access. The region's strategic location, equidistant from Paris, Beijing, Singapore, and Johannesburg, yields military and trading privileges to the powers that control it⁷. At the same time, the geopolitical dynamics affecting the region have resulted in recurring political volatility.

The incessant efforts by Washington since 1945 to secure control over the region, and exclude the British and the French, has repeatedly faltered. There was, for instance, a failure in associating the region with NATO through the pact of Baghdad, especially with the Shah of Iran's fall. Within the last decade, Washington embarked on the curious 'Common Middle East Market' initiative, whereby some Gulf countries would have supplied capital, other Arab countries cheap labour, and Israel technological control and intermediary functions. Accepted by the Gulf countries and Egypt, the project was refused by Syria, Iraq and Iran. It was thus necessary to knock down these three regimes in order to advance the project. That has now been accomplished today for Iraq, but the results are not overwhelmingly positive for the US.

The reason for the lack of success is quite simply that Arab (and Iranian) nationalist populism, aiming to impose its independence from world-system centres, conflicts with the objectives of American hegemony. Earlier, the Soviets supported the nationalist project so as to stymie Washington's aggressive plans. However, the project rapidly exhausted its potential for transformation by drifting into dictatorships. The vacuum created by this drift opened the way for political Islam and the obscurantist autocracies of the Gulf, the preferential allies of Washington. The region has thereby become one of the underbellies of the global system, producing conjunctures allowing external intervention (including military) that the current regimes are incapable of containing – or discouraging – for a lack of popular legitimacy.

The region constituted – and continues to constitute – in the American military project of global apportionment, a priority zone of national security (like the Caribbean), in close cooperation with Turkey and Israel. The latter, through warfare, colonial expansionism, and an apartheid-like regime⁸, plays a crucial role of regional shock troop to check Arab nationalism and create the conditions for a political realignment more favourable to the US⁹. In this, there is a meeting of interests between Zionism (Jewish nationalism) and dominant international capital. The Islamic obscurantist autocracies supported in the past are now inconvenient, owing to their inability to contain 'terrorism' (aimed principally at the US), leaving 'moderate' political Islam as the only alignment option left for the US. The EU accepts secondary status and supports this apportionment and racist colonisation scheme, regardless of signs of obvious irritation after the Iraq war and infrequent and weak complaints regarding the Palestinians' plight, provided that the US defend the vital interests of the triad, that is to say its oil supply. The state of permanent war that the western powers have imposed on the region, through Israeli intransigence and expansionism, constitutes a powerful reason allowing for the self-perpetuation of autocratic Arabic regimes and blocking any possibility of democratic evolution that would weaken US hegemonic strategy. The struggle of the Palestinian people is therefore a crucial component in the weakening of the Triad.

Confronted with the deployment of the US project, the EU have invented their own project, baptised the 'Euro-Mediterranean partnership.' This is a decidedly cowardly project encumbered by incoherent prattling, purporting to reconcile Arab countries with Israel while excluding the Gulf countries from 'Euro-Mediterranean dialogue'. These latter excluded countries are implicitly acknowledged as the exclusive province of Washington (Amin and El Kenz, 2003).

THE EU AND ITS ARAB AND MEDITERRANEAN SOUTH

The Arab world and the Middle East occupy a decisive place in the US hegemonic project. The EU response to the US challenge in the region will be one of the decisive tests for the 'European' project itself. The question is thus to know the degree to which the residents of the Mediterranean and its extensions – Europeans, Arabs, Turks, Iranians, countries from the Horn of Africa – align their security concerns with those of the US. Mere logic should make these interests antagonistic with those of the US but so far the EU has not given any active indication in this sense. One of the reasons that could explain EU inertia is that the interests and priorities of the EU partners are sufficiently divergent. The Mediterranean front is not central to the polarised world of developed capitalism: the regions of the North Sea, the American northeast and of central Japan have an incomparable density of industrialisation. For northern Europe - Germany and Great Britain – and a fortiori for the US and Japan, the danger of chaos in the countries located on the south of the Mediterranean does not have the same gravity as for the Italians, the Spaniards and the French.

Various European powers until 1945 had frequently conflictual Mediterranean policies. After the Second World War, the western European states had practically no Mediterranean and Arab policy other than what the alignment with the US implied. Great Britain and France, which had colonial possessions in the region, merely carried out rearguard battles to preserve their advantages. Great Britain renounced Egypt and Sudan in 1954 and, after the defeat in the adventure of the tripartite aggression of 1956, proceeded to a reversal, and finally in the 1960s abandoned its influence in the coastal countries of the Gulf. France, eliminated from Syria in 1945, finally accepted the independence of Algeria in 1962, but preserved a certain nostalgia for its influence on the Maghreb region and Lebanon, encouraged by local ruling classes, at least in Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon. At the same time, the European reconstruction did not give rise any common policy substituting for the withdrawal from the colonies. One remembers that when, after Israel-Arab war of 1973, the oil prices were readjusted, the European Community (EC), surprised in its sleep, rediscovered that it had 'interests' in the region. But this awakening did not cause any important initiative on its part, for example, concerning the Palestinian problem. The EC remained, in this field as well as in others, irresolute and inconsistent. Some progress towards autonomy with respect to the US nevertheless occurred during the 1970s, culminating in the Venice Summit (1980); but this progress was not consolidated and eventually faded in the 1980s, disappearing altogether with the alignment with Washington during the Gulf crisis. To shed more light on this, however, it is best to study the relationships between each EU member and the Arab-Iranian world.

Great Britain does not have a Mediterranean and Arab policy specific to it any more. In this field like elsewhere the British society in all its political expressions (Conservative and Labour) made the choice of an unconditional alignment with the US. It is a fundamental historical choice, amply outmoding the conjunctural circumstances and reinforcing considerably the European submission to the requirements of the American strategy.

For different reasons Germany also does not have any specific Arab and Mediterranean policy and will probably not seek to develop one in the foreseeable future. Handicapped by its division and its status, the Federal Republic of Germany devoted all its efforts to economic development, accepting a low political profile following simultaneously and ambiguously both the US and the 'Europeanism' of the European Economic Community. Initially, German reunification and the re-conquest of full international sovereignty did not modify its behaviour; rather, it accentuated these expressions. The reason is that dominant political forces (conservatives, liberals and social democrats) prioritised the expansion of German capitalism into central and eastern Europe, reducing the relative importance of a common 'European' integration strategy, both politically and economically. It remains to be seen whether this tendency will be reversed, given Berlin's response to the Iraq War.

French approaches have been much more balanced even if not renouncing its powerful position, being simultaneously an Atlantic and Mediterranean country, the inheritor of a colonial Empire, and among the victors in the Second World War. During the first decade after the war, successive French governments tried to preserve colonial possessions through an anti-Communist and anti-Soviet Atlanticist build-up. However, Washington's support was secured in light of the outcome of tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956. Mediterranean and Arab policy was largely, by force of circumstances, simply retrograde. De Gaulle broke simultaneously with both palaeo-colonial and pro-American illusions and instead initiated the ambitious projects of economic modernisation, decolonisation (substituting an outmoded colonialism with a more flexible neo-colonialism), and European integration (compensating for weaknesses intrinsic to an average core country like France). Within the latter, De Gaulle envisioned an autonomous 'Europe' relative to the US not only on economic, but also on political and even, in the long term, military terms. As corollary, he conceived, also in the long run, the associating the USSR with this 'European' project ('Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals'). But Gaullism did not outlive its founder and, since 1968, French political forces, both the traditional right as well as the socialist left, gradually returned to their former attitudes. Their vision narrowed down to the 'Common Market' between France and West Germany and to the invitation of Great Britain to join the EEC (forgetting that England would be the Americans' Trojan horse). This shift implied the abandonment of any Arab policy beyond the simple defence of immediate mercantile interests. On a political level, France behaved in the Arab world as in sub-Saharan Africa as an auxiliary and complementary force of the strategy of American hegemony. It is in this framework that we must place the discourse on the Mediterranean, which calls for Maghreb countries to associate with the EU (in the same manner as Turkey), undermining any prospect for pan-Arab rapprochement, giving up Mashrek to American-Israeli interventionism. However, the Maghreb ruling classes' support dwindled with the Gulf crisis, as the masses of North Africa affirmed forcefully their solidarity with Mashrek.

Italy, due to its geographical position, is very sensitive to Mediterranean problems, but this does not mean that it has any efficacious or autonomous Mediterranean and Arab policy. Marginalized for a long time in the world economy, Italy was forced to inscribe its Mediterranean ambitions in the wake of a forced alliance with other more decisive European powers. Since it achieved its unity in the middle of the last century until the fall of Mussolini in 1943, it always hesitated between alliance with the masters of the Mediterranean (Great Britain and France) or with those that could offset them (Germany). Atlanticism, which is exercised in Italy through a low profile foreign policy under the tutelage of the US, has

dominated the activities and choices of successive Italian governments since 1947. This ideology is even stronger in certain sectors of the secular bourgeoisie (Republicans, Liberals, and especially Socialists), but not among the Christian Democrats, due to the pressure of catholic universalism. Characteristically, the papacy often took less retrograde positions with regard to Arab peoples (in particular on the Palestinian question) and the Third World than those of many Italian and western governments in general. The slide of a section of the Catholic Church towards the left, under the influence of Latin American liberation theology, today reinforces this universalism whose secular versions are found in the pacifist, ecologist and third-worldist movements.

The current Europeanist political formation has its roots in the 19th century and the North-South divide that the Italian unification did not surmount. Hooked to the interests of big Milanese capital, this formation prioritises economic expansion towards eastern Europe, in close association with Germany. Within this framework, Croatia constitutes an immediate objective and certain analysts pinpoint here an Italian expansionistic foray into Dalmatia. This accords with the tradition of expansionism through a low international profile that places its relationship with the residents of the Mediterranean south as a secondary activity. A parallel choice of Spain would further isolate France in the European concert, reducing the range to its lowest common denominator. The Mediterranean current, which is always weak, in spite of the contribution that universalism could bring it, is expressed, for this reason, in Levantine clothing: it is a matter of making deals here and there without being concerned with the framework of political strategy in which they are inscribed. For another, nobler and more consistent policy to take shape that would reinforce Italy's autonomy and that of its Arab partners, it would be necessary that a convergence be achieved between this project and the universalist ideals, especially through the Italian left, both Communist and Christian. The Italian right, reunified under the leadership of Berlusconi, has opted for the tutelage of the Washington-London axis. The behaviour of the police forces at the G-8 meeting in Genoa (July 2001) expresses this choice clearly.

Spain and Portugal occupy an important place in the geo-strategy of world hegemony for the US. The Pentagon considers indeed that the Azores-Canaries-Gibraltar-Balearic Islands axis is essential for monitoring the North and South Atlantic and controlling the entry to the Mediterranean. The US forged its alliance with these two countries immediately after the Second World War, without feeling the least embarrassed about their fascist character. On the contrary, the fanatical anti-communism of the Salazar and Franco dictatorships served the US hegemon cause by permitting the admission of Portugal into NATO and establishing some important American bases on Spanish soil. In return, the US and its European allies helped Portugal without reservation until its final defeat as a colonial war. The democratic evolution of Spain after Franco's death was not met with questioning the country's integration into the American military system. On the contrary, in spite of majority opposition, Spain became a NATO member (in May 1982) and this membership was deliberately tied to EEC admission so as to blackmail the electorate into acquiescence. Since then, Madrid has been aligned with Washington without reservation. In return, the US would intervene to defuse any Moroccan claims over Ceuta and Melilla and intercede on the subject of Gibraltar, all doubtful promises. The fact remains that the Atlanticist alignment enforced on Madrid resulted in radical changes for the Spanish armed forces. The army was diffused throughout the country through the Franco regime, deployed more as an internal police than a deterrent force directed against outsiders. The Spanish army was therefore ripe for modernisation with the intent of more international policing, as in the case of French, British and German armies.

The post-Franco socialist governments proceeded to modernise and reorganise the Spanish forces for an eventual 'southern front'. This swing, required by Washington and NATO, is one of the many manifestations of the new American strategy substituting the south for the east in the 'defence' of the west. It is accompanied, in Spain, by a new discourse that creates the hypothetical southern enemy, drawing from the old Reconquista tradition popular in Catholic circles of the army. This change signals Spain's determination to play an active role within NATO, in the framework of the reorientation of the western strategies towards interventionism in the Third World. Already the Iberian peninsula constitutes the first post of a Washington-Tel Aviv axis, the principal European bridgehead of the American Rapid Deployment Force (which played a decisive part in the Gulf War), supplemented by bases in Sicily (which were also never used until the operations directed against the Arab World: Libya, Israeli bombardment of Tunisia, etc.) and by the facilities granted by Morocco. Of course, this policy empties the EU-Arab dialogue of any serious content. The new democratic Spain, pretending to stimulate a policy of friendship towards Latin America and the Arab world, seems to have started precisely in the opposite direction of its stated principles. Aznar's rightist government has confirmed Madrid's Atlanticist alignment. Even more than Italy, Spain refuses to capitalise on its Mediterranean position for the benefit of a new EU policy towards the Arab world, Africa and the Third World. As a result, the French idea of a Mediterranean group at the heart of the EU remains suspended in the air, without any serious base of operations. Besides, on the economic level, the Spanish capital, heir to the Franquist tradition, places its expansionist hopes in the development of ties with Germany and Japan, invited to participate in the modernisation of Catalonia.

As long as it existed, the east-west confrontation passed through the Balkans, obliging of local states to affiliate either with Moscow or Washington to tone down nationalist quarrels (excepting Yugoslavia, since 1948, and Albania, since 1960). Turkey was placed in the western camp since 1945, after putting a hasty end to its neutrality with regard to Hitlerite Germany. Stalin's post-war claims on Kars and Ardahan in the Caucasus and on passage through the Dardanelles were quickly warded off thanks to Washington's decisive support in spite of its undemocratic political system. In return, Turkey, as a member of NATO, allowed for the deployment of the closest American bases to the USSR. There is no doubt that Turkish society remains part of the Third World, even if, since Ataturk, the ruling classes of this country proclaim the Europeanism of the new Turkey, knocking at the door of an unwilling EU. Being a faithful US and NATO ally, Turkey seems intent on playing an active part in the Middle East, making the west pay for the services that it could render them in this region. The handicap of its Kurdish question, whose very existence it refuses to recognise, has made it hesitate in making this choice until now. The same applies for a rekindling of a Pan-Turkish option, popular just after the First World War in certain Kemalist milieus but quickly archived. But today the decomposition of the ex-USSR constitutes an invitation for Ankara to exert a powerful influence on a Turcophone bloc, which dominates Central Asia from Azerbaijan to Sinkiang. Iran has always feared such an outcome, which would not only call into question the status of Iranian Southern Azerbaijan, but also undermine the security of its long North Asian border with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

In contrast, Greece did not have the chance to enlist in the anti-Soviet camp. It was constrained and forced by British intervention, superseded in 1948 by the US. In conformity with Yalta agreements, the USSR abandoned the Greek resistance, led by the Communist Party, which had liberated the country and had garnered popular support. The west ensured control by supporting successive repressive regimes and, finally, the military dictatorship of

the colonels, wiping out this popular liberation and democratic movement. This was carried out without compunction under NATO, too busy protecting the 'free world' against the 'totalitarian' Satan. The return of Greece to democracy through PASOK's electoral victory in 1981 would have been likely to call in question any fidelity to NATO. To counter this possibility, the EC stepped in to help Washington, as in the case of Spain, binding Greek candidature to the EEC with maintaining its participation in the Atlantic alliance. The accession into the EEC moreover was itself very controversial. Papandreou's decision to join despite everything, after some hesitations and in spite of the option of PASOK's third-worldist and neutralist principles, seems to have initiated an irreversible trend even at the level of political mentality, flattering Greek people's aspirations with dreams of modernity and Europeanism. However, Greece's new European partners never had much to offer and Greece remains to this day one of the poorest members of the EU. Athens' faithfulness to Atlanticist EU was especially worthless in its conflict with Turkey. The fact remains that, even if the Greek dictatorship had a crucial responsibility in the Cypriot tragedy of 1974, the open Turkish aggression (the Attila operation) and the subsequent creation of a 'Turkish republic of Cyprus', in direct violation of the island's status, were not only accepted, but probably were in agreement with the services of the Pentagon before which the EC yielded once more. It is obvious that, for the US, the friendship of Turkey, a considerable regional military power, surpasses that of Greece, even if more democratic since 1981.

In 1945, the whole of Balkan-Danubian region had entered in the bosom of Moscow, either through Soviet military occupation with the consent of the Yalta agreement partners (Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria) or through their own liberation struggles and popular support (Yugoslavia and Albania). Titoist Yugoslavia, isolated in 1948-1953 by the ostracism of Moscow and western anti-communism, had successfully pursued a "non-alignment" strategy, which highlighted its friendship with the Third World, particularly starting from the Bandung Conference (1955). At the time, Yugoslav geo-strategic thought remained nevertheless largely insensitive to the Mediterranean dimension. Perhaps Italy's abandonment of its traditional ambitions regarding Dalmatia (and Albania) and the solution found in 1954 to the thorny problem of Trieste were the essence of this historical lapse of memory. Yugoslavia instead existed as a state preoccupied above all by Danubian-Balkan regional relationships and the global super-power equilibrium. It managed to capitalise on the benefits of integrating northern and Danubian (Croatia-Slovenia) and Russian and Balkan (Serbia) aspects. The rapprochement initiated by Khrushchev and continued by his successors, recognising the positive role of Titoist neutralism in the global arena, guaranteed Yugoslav security against regional conflict and allowed Yugoslav diplomacy to spread in the international arena, giving this country a disproportionate weight relative to its size. But if this diplomacy had incontestably won some points in Asia, Africa and even in Latin America, it made no progress in Europe, where calls for a wider neutralist front never found favourable ears. However, Sweden, Finland and Austria could have shared some positive initiatives that deviated from the spirit of the cold war. Later, PASOK's Greece tried to widen this neutral European camp in 1982, proposing co-operation for the de-nuclearisation of the Balkans. But none of these initiatives proposals found any support.

Following 1989, there was an erosion and then a collapse of legitimacy for these Balkan regimes, which were founded on a certain degree of development, whatever its limits and negative aspects. The general political and economic collapse shattered the unity of the ruling class, who in desperation tried to salvage their own legitimacy through nationalism. The foundering of the conditions of legitimacy was nourished by western powers to allow for

an offensive of savage capitalism and German inroads into the region. The EU's hasty recognition of independence for Slovenia and Croatia, under German pressures, accelerated the fragmentation of Yugoslavia that precipitated the civil war. It is interesting that the EU tried to impose on Bosnia the coexistence of communities whose separation they preached elsewhere! If it is possible for Serbs, Croatians and Moslems to coexist in a smaller Bosnia, why then could they not have coexisted in larger Yugoslavia? Obviously, such a strategy hardly had any chance of success and this made it possible for the US to intervene in turn, and in the heart of Europe! In Washington's strategy, the Balkans form part of an arch that extends through the Caucasus and Central Asia and includes the Middle East (Amin, 1992b).

Given the above geo-strategies employed by EU and otherwise northern Mediterranean countries, it is clear that there exists a faithful allegiance to American hegemony with respect to the Third World that is in continuity with the pre-1989 east-west conflict, particularly in regards to the treatment of Arab and other countries of the southern Mediterranean, Red Sea, and Persian Gulf regions. In this latest spate of changes and major continuities, the Balkan and Danubian countries, implicated yesterday in one way or another in the east-west conflict, have ceased being active agents in what is a continuing north-south conflict and have instead become passive objects of western expansionism.

QUICK SANDS OF THE 'EUROPEAN' PROJECT

The sharp contrast between the bold audacity of the American project and the weakness of the EU's version and its internal incoherence is a good indicator of the existing predominance of Atlanticism, which precludes sharing decision-making responsibilities brings into relief the asymmetry between the US and EU. This directly contradicts Tony Blair, the advocate of the construction of a unipolar world, who justifies this on the basis of 'sharing' principles. Unless such statements are not simply the means of fooling EU citizens, Washington's arrogance is turning this into an increasingly illusory hope¹⁰. Is an alternative option to this unipolar Atlanticist strategy for the EU? For any alternative to be realised, the EU will first have to extricate itself from the quick sands into which it is slipping.

All EU governments until now have been won over to the theses of liberalism. This does not mean anything less than the obliteration of the 'European' project, its double dilution, economic (the EU's advantages are dissolved through globalisation) and political (EU political and military autonomy disappears). So far, the North Atlantic project (the Triad) under American command has prevented its development. American-led wars have certainly stirred public opinion and governments, within the EU, Russia and China. Yet the fact remains that these same governments have not called into question their faithful alignment to the needs of liberalism. This major contradiction will have to be overcome in one way or another, either by their submission to Washington's dictates or through a true rupture putting an end to Atlanticism.

The major political conclusion that I draw from this analysis is that the EU cannot leave Atlanticism as long as political alliances defining the power blocs remain centred about dominant transnational capital. It is only if social and political struggles manage to modify the content of these blocs and to impose new historical compromises between capital and labour that the EU will be able to distance itself from Washington, allowing for the revival of an alternative 'European' project. Under these conditions the EU should be engaged at the international level, in its relationships with the east and the south, on a path other than that

traced by the exclusive requirements of collective imperialism, thus initiating a long march beyond capitalism. In other words, the EU will be of the left (the term left being taken here seriously) or it will not be at all.

To reconcile the adherence to liberalism and the assertion of EU political autonomy remains the objective of certain fractions of political classes anxious to preserve the exclusive positions of large capital. It is very doubtful that they will be able to manage that. The popular classes throughout the EU, or somewhere therein at least, will be able to overcome the crisis that they confront, precisely for the same reasons that the political culture of at least certain EU countries could produce a rebirth of the left. The obvious precondition is that it releases itself from the virus of liberalism. This would be an outcome of the contradictions implicit from the very beginning during the birth of the 'European' project as the western European wing of the Atlanticist project, during the US-USSR rivalry. The deployment of this Atlanticist project, accepted by a weakened and apprehensive post-war bourgeoisie, created the conditions for western Europe's eventual challenging of the US in economic and technological terms. The project's deployment erased the principal and violent adversities that had marked European history during the past century and a half: the three major countries of the continent - France, Germany and Russia - are reconciled. All these evolutions are, in my opinion, positive and rich with still more potential. The social-democratic historical compromise tempered the liberal foundations of the Atlanticist project until the 1980s, forcing capital to adjust to the demands of social justice expressed by the working classes. The subsequent turn to US-style, anti-social liberalism has plunged EU societies into a multi-dimensional crisis aggravated by the subsidiarity of the EU's economy to North American demands. Aside from the economic, there is a social crisis, which is accentuated by the rise of resistance and the struggles of the popular classes against the fatal consequences of the liberal option. Lastly, there is the beginning of a political crisis - the refusal to align, at least unconditionally, with the US' endless war against the south.

CONCLUSION: THE EMPIRE OF CHAOS AND THE PERMANENT WAR

The current project of US domination is the extension of the Monroe doctrine to the entire planet; it is an 'Empire of chaos', unfolding since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it will be fatally confronted by the growing resistance of the peoples in the Old World not ready to be subjected to it. The US then will have to behave like a 'Rogue State' par excellence, substituting international law with permanent war (starting with the Middle East, but aiming beyond that to Russia and Asia), slipping into the slippery slope of fascism (e.g., the Patriot Act and other measures worthy of a police state and meted out preferentially against immigrants and minorities).

Will the EU, partner in this system of collective imperialism, accept its subordinate position? It is not so much the conflict of interest within dominant capital as the difference that separates the political cultures of the EU from that which characterises the historical formation of the US that lies behind the probable eventual failure of the US project (Amin, 2003b, 2004). More importantly, how will the peoples and states in the EU face the challenges of simultaneous economic, social, and political crises borne out of Atlanticism? Europeanists are divided into three fairly different groups comprising those that (1) defend the liberal road and accept US leadership almost unconditionally, (2) defend liberalism but prefer an independent political 'Europe', and (3) wish (and fight) for 'social Europe'. Enviroined by this latter fraction is a capitalism tempered by a new social compromise

between capital and labour operating at the EU scale and simultaneously a political Europe practising friendly, democratic and peaceful relations with the south, Russia and China (this has been evident in the European Social Forum in Florence, 2002, as well as during the demonstrations against the Iraq war).

On the other hand, there are certainly others that do not think any of the three pro-European options possible or even desirable. They remain minorities at the moment but are certainly gathering momentum. They will strengthen their position on the basis of two fundamentally different options. One is a right-wing populist option that refuses any progress in political and economic integration, except apparently with transnational capital (!). The other is a left-wing popular option, oriented towards national, citizenship, democratic and social issues.

On what forces is each one of these tendencies based and what are their respective chances? Dominant capital is liberal, by nature. In fact it is logically inclined towards supporting the first of the three 'Europeanist' options. Tony Blair represents the most coherent expression of what I have qualified as the collective imperialism of the triad. The political class united behind the Star-Spangled Banner is inclined, if necessary, to sacrifice the 'European' project, or at least to dissipate any illusions about it, by maintaining it as the European section of the Atlanticist project. But Bush, like Hitler, does not conceive allies other than unconditionally aligned subordinates. This is why important segments of the political class, including the right – although in principle being the defenders of the interests of dominant capital – refuse to line up with the US as yesterday they did with Hitler. If a new Churchill were possible in the EU it would be Chirac. Will he take on this role?

The strategy of dominant capital can be accommodated in an anti-Europeanism of the right, which would be satisfied with demagogic nationalist rhetoric (mobilising, for example, around the theme of immigration), while being subjected in fact to the requirements of a not specifically 'European', but rather a globalised liberalism. Aznar and Berlusconi constitute the prototypes of these Washington allies, as are the servile political classes of Eastern Europe. But the second option is difficult to hold in the face of the activities of the major European governments - France and Germany. This suggests the existence of ambitions of sufficiently powerful capital capable of emancipating itself from US dominance, but this remains highly improbable. This choice is nevertheless that of allies facing a belligerent North American adversary, an enemy of the whole of humanity, that will be driven to seek alliances on the left (the only ones which can give force to their project of independence vis-à-vis Washington). If this alliance takes form, then the question becomes one of the sorts of EU integration that will occur and whether it will be sufficiently powerful and coordinated to counter American power. This is unlikely, given how the current framework systematically favours only the pro-American road. It will not, however, be necessary to fracture the EU and renounce its project definitively.

The alternative strategy is to leave the 'European' project in place, while to developing other axes of counter-Atlanticist alliances. Priority should be given to the construction of a political and strategic alliance between Paris, Berlin and Moscow stretched to Beijing and Delhi if possible. The objective would be to restore international pluralism and to the UN in all its functions while building military forces that could effectively challenge American predominance. These three or four powers have all the technological and financial means to overtake the US and the criminal ambitions of the American challenge compel their alliance

for an anti-hegemonic front comparable to the anti-Nazi alliance of yore. This strategy would also have the merit of reconciling the ‘pro-Europeans’ of the second and third groups and the ‘non-Europeanists’ of left. It would thus create the favourable conditions for a long-term revival of a ‘European’ project, liberating Great Britain from US submission and Eastern Europe from a servile political culture. This will take much time, but there will be no progress possible for any ‘European’ project as long as the US strategy is not routed (Amin, 2003b).

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¹ At that time, the US did not yet have the atomic bomb at its disposal.

² This refers to the part played by Berlin in the dismemberment of Yugoslavia by the hasty recognition of the Slovenian and Croatian independence was its expression (Amin, 1994).

³ The economic growth of the Clinton years, vaunted as the result of a "liberalism" that Europe was unfortunately resisting, was in fact largely fake, and in any case, non-generalisable, depending on capital transfers that meant the stagnation of partner economies. For all sectors of the real production system, US growth was not better than that of Europe. The ‘American miracle’ was fed exclusively by a growth in expenditure produced by growing social inequalities (financial and personal services, provided by legions of lawyers and private police forces, etc.). In this sense, Clinton’s liberalism indeed prepared the conditions for the reactionary wave, and later victory, of Bush Jr.

⁴ Conventional economists fail to recognise this problem, erroneously assuming the abolition of national borders through ‘globalisation’ and the consequent impossibility of managing economic growth (saving and investment) at national levels. Moreover, they are trapped in tautological reasoning: the explanation for the international financing of the US deficit supposedly lies in the preferences of global saving and investment flows, which are themselves explained away by the draw

of US deficits. Why is such ineptitude is accepted? No doubt, the teams of scholarly economists who encircle the EU (and also, Russian and Chinese) political classes of both the electoral the right and left are themselves victims of their own economic alienation, which I term the 'liberal virus'. Alternatively, they fully understand this and are acting in their self-interest by contributing to a fashionable ideology, which is well funded by state and capital through numerous channels.

⁵ Elsewhere, I critique the ideological formulations that support this fashionable notion (Amin, 2004).

⁶ This is herein understood as including the Caucasus and ex-Soviet Central Asia as well.

⁷ In earlier times, control over this inevitable crossing point gave the Caliphate the privilege of drawing large benefits from the internationalisation of the epoch (Amin, 1996). After the Second World War, the region attained primacy in the US military strategy of encircling the Soviet power. Following the collapse of the Soviet adversary, the establishment of US military bases simultaneously reduces Europe to vassalage through energy dependence, and subdues Russia, China and India through permanent blackmail coupled with threats of military intervention if necessary. The control over the region thus enhances the extension of the Monroe doctrine to the Old World.

⁸ Israel is the only country in the world that refuses to recognise any defined borders for itself (and for this reason would not have the right to be a UN member state). With US military and financial support, it arrogates to itself the right to conquer new areas and treat local inhabitants as the US did in the 19th century relative to Native American peoples.

⁹ This can be witnessed lately in the choice made by Arab governments – with the exception of Syrian and Lebanese – to enter the Madrid and Oslo (1993) negotiations and subscribe to the American so-called 'peace' plan, which could not yield but the result of encouraging Israel to reinforce its expansionist project. By openly rejecting the terms of 'Oslo agreement', Ariel Sharon demonstrates merely what was already understood, that it was not a matter of furthering any 'definitive peace', but of opening a new phase of Zionist colonial expansion.

¹⁰ Stalin's realism relative to the Nazis, in that they 'did not know where it was necessary to stop', is literally applicable to the junta controlling the US. And the hopes animated by Blair only resemble those of Mussolini in his capacity of assuaging Hitler!