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## **GEOSTRATEGY OF CONTEMPORARY IMPERIALISM**

### **1. From permanent conflict of imperialisms to collective imperialism**

In its globalised deployment, imperialism was always conjugated in plural, since its inception (in the XVIth century) until 1945. The conflict of imperialisms, permanent and, often violent, too has occupied in fact a decisive place in the transformation of the world as class struggle, through which fundamental contradictions of capitalism are expressed. Moreover, social fights and conflicts of the imperialisms are closely articulated and it is this articulation that determines the course of really existing capitalism. I also point out that the analysis that I have proposed in this respect differs vastly from that of the "succession of hegemonies".

The Second World War ended in a major transformation with regard to the forms of imperialism: the substitution of the multiplicity of imperialisms in permanent conflict by collective imperialism combining the ensemble of the centres of the world capitalist system (simply, the "triad": the United States and its external Canadian province, Western and central Europe, Japan). This new form of imperialist expansion went through various phases of its development, but it remained all the time present. The eventual hegemonic role of the United States, whose bases will have to be specified as the forms of its articulation with the new collective imperialism, must be located within this perspective. These questions pose problems, which are precisely those that I would wish to point out here.

The United States drew a gigantic benefit from the Second World War, which had ruined its principal combatants - Europe, Soviet Union, China and Japan. It was thus in a position to exert its economic hegemony, since it concentrated more than half of the global industrial production and had specialty in the new technologies that would shape the development of the second half of the century. In addition, they possessed a specialty in the nuclear weapon - the new "absolute" weapon. This is why I situate the break announcing the end of war not at Yalta as what is often told (at Yalta the United States did not have the weapon yet) but at Potsdam (a few days before the bombardment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki). At Potsdam the American tone changed: the decision to engage what was going to be the "cold war" was made by them.

This double absolute advantage was nevertheless eroded in a relatively short period of time (within two decades), by double recovery, economic for the capitalist Europe and Japan, military for the Soviet Union. It will be remembered that this relative retreat of the US power provided at the time a flowering of the discourse on "American decline", and even an ascent of alternative hegemonies (Europe, Japan, later China...).

Does this new collective imperialism thus stir a "definitive" (non-conjunctural) qualitative transformation? Does it inevitably imply a "leadership" of the United States in one way or another?

## **2. The project of the ruling class of the United States: to extend their military control over the whole Planet**

This project, which I will describe without much hesitation as overweening, even crazy, and criminal by what it implies, did not come out of President Bush Junior's head, to be implemented by an extreme right junta, seizing power through dubious elections.

It is the project which the ruling class of the United States unceasingly nurtured since 1945, even though its implementation evidently passed through ups and downs, encountered a few vicissitudes and was here and there put to check, and could not be pursued with consistency and violence that this implied in certain conjunctural moments like ours, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The project always rendered a decisive role to its military dimension. It was conceived after Potsdam, as I pointed out, founded on nuclear monopoly. Very quickly, the United States conceived a global military strategy, dividing the planet into regions and allocating the responsibility for the control of each of them under a "US Military Command". I refer to what I wrote on this subject even before the collapse of the USSR, and on the priority position occupied by the Middle East in this global strategic vision. (4) The objective was not only "to encircle the USSR" (and China), but as well to draw up means making Washington the ruler in the last resort of all the regions of the planet. In other words, it extended the Monroe Doctrine to the whole planet, which effectively gave the exclusive right of managing the ensemble of the New World to the United States in accordance to what it defined as its "national interests".

The preferred instrument of the hegemonist offensive is therefore the military. US hegemony, which in turn guarantees the hegemony of the Triad over the world system, therefore demands that its allies agree to follow in the American wake, like Great Britain, and Japan, acknowledging the necessity of doing so, and acknowledging it without any emotional crises or any hand-wringing over "culture". But that means that all the speeches that the European politicians feed their audiences about the economic power of Europe have no real significance. By placing itself solely on the terrain of mercantile disputes, with no project of its own, Europe is beaten in advance. Washington knows that very well.

The project implies that the "sovereignty of the national interests of the United States" is placed above all the other principles controlling the political behaviours that we regard as "legitimate" means; it develops a systematic mistrust towards all supranational rights. The ruling class of the United States proclaims openly 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 gave itself the right to lead "preventive wars". Three principal potential adversaries are targeted here.

In the first place is Russia, whose dismemberment, after that of the USSR, constitutes henceforth a major strategic objective of the United States. 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", as what had been for Germany and Japan. It forgets that Washington needed the recovery of these two adversaries in the Second World War, precisely to face the Soviet challenge. The new conjuncture is different, the United States not having more serious

competitor. Their option is then to permanently and completely destroy the ravaged Russian adversary. Will Putin understand this and initiate Russia in coming out of its illusions?

In the second place China, whose expanse and economic success worry the United States, whose strategic objective remains here too to dismember this large country.

Europe comes in the third place in this global vision of the new masters of the world. 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 the new servile powers of the East), the "quicksand of the European project" (the point on which I will come back), the converging interests of the dominant capital of the collective imperialism of the triad, contribute in the effacement of the European project, maintained in its status of "European wing of the US project". The diplomacy of Washington has managed to keep Germany on its trail, the reunification and the conquest of Eastern Europe even seemed to reinforce this alliance: Germany would be encouraged to reclaim its tradition of "thrust towards the East" (the part played by Berlin in the dismemberment of Yugoslavia by the hasty recognition of the Slovenian and Croatian independence was its expression (8)) and, as for the rest, induced to navigate on Washington's trail. Is there a reversing of steam 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, in counterpoint, a reinforcement of Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis, which would then become the most solid pillar of a European system independent of Washington.

### **3. The economic and political management of the new imperialist system under US leadership**

The instruments for that management were created after world war II and eventually reformulated with a view to meet new challenges.

The main of these instruments are, with respect to the economic dimension of the management of the system, WTO, World Bank and IMF while, with respect to its political and military management, these are G7/8 and NATO.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) was established precisely to strengthen these "advantages" of transnational capital and establish their legitimacy for the ruling of the global economy. The so called "rights of industrial and intellectual property" are conceived with a view to perpetuating the monopoly of transnationals, guarantee their super profits and create additional enormous obstacles for further autonomous industrial development in the peripheries. Similarly the offensive of WTO aiming at integrating agriculture in the global deregulated open market will simply destroy any attempt of countries of the South to ensure food security, and furthers throw into poverty hundreds of millions of peasants in the South. The logics which commands these policies of systematic overprotection of northern monopolies denies the validity of the dominant discourse with respect to the advantages of the so called "free trade, free access to markets". These policies contradict brutally that discourse, which is therefore nothing but simply "propaganda", i.e. lie. That logics is clearly formulated in the strategy of WTO aiming at developing an "international business law" which is given priority over any national legislation. The scandalous project of a "Multinational Agreement on Investment", prepared in secret by OECD countries, is part of that plan.

Other institutions of the global system also play some role in that frame, while only supportive of G7 overall strategies. That is the case for instance of the World Bank. This institution, often pompously presented as the major “think tank” formulating strategic choices for the global economy, is certainly not that important. World Bank is hardly more than a kind of Ministry of Propaganda for the G7 in charge of producing slogans and discourses, while actual responsibility for making economic strategic decisions is reserved to WTO and for political decisions to NATO. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is more important, albeit not as much as is being usually said. As long as the principle of flexible exchange rates govern the international monetary system and as long as IMF is not accountable for the relations between major currencies (dollar, mark-euro, yen), the Fund operates only as a kind of supreme currency authority for the south, governed by the North.

These institutions – and particularly G7 and NATO – are there to replace the UN family, which is invited to submit, or will be marginalised and perhaps even dismantled.

#### **4. Collective Imperialism of the triad and hegemonies of the United States: their articulation and their contradictions**

Today’s world is militarily unipolar. At the same time, some fissures seem to become apparent between the United States and some of the European countries with regard to the political management of a global system so far united on the principles of liberalism, in theory at least. Are these fissures only conjunctural and of limited range, or do they proclaim some lasting changes? Thus, it will be necessary to analyse in all their complexity the logics that command the deployment of the new phase of collective imperialism (North-South relationships in the current language) and the specific objectives of the US project. In this spirit I will approach succinctly and successively five series of questions.

- *Concerning the nature of evolutions which have led to the constitution of the new collective imperialism*

I suggest here that the formation of the new collective imperialism finds its origin in the transformation of the conditions of competition. Only a few decades ago, the large firms fought their competing battles essentially over the national markets, whether it is the matter of the United States’ (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 United States). The winners of the national “matches” could perform well on the world market. Today, the size of the market necessary for gaining an upper hand in the first cycle of matches approaches some 500-600 million “potential consumers”. The battle must thus be launched straightaway on the global market and won on this ground. And those who perform over this market assert then more over their respective national terrains. Thorough internationalisation becomes the primary setting of the activity of the large firms. In other words, in the pair national/global, the terms of causality are reversed: earlier the national power commanded the global presence and today it is the reverse. Therefore the transnational firms, whatever is 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, irrespective of what they are.

The solidarity of the dominant segments of the transnationalized capital of all the partners in the triad is real, and is expressed by their rallying to globalized neo-liberalism. The United States is seen from this perspective as the defender (military if necessary) of these "common interests". Nonetheless, Washington does not intend "to equitably share" the profits of its leadership. The United States seeks, on the contrary, to reduce its allies into vassals and, thus is only ready to make minor concessions to 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.

• *Concerning the place of the United States in 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.

I maintain, in counterpoint that, in the system of collective imperialism the United States does not have decisive economic advantages; the US production system 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 100 billion dollars in 1989 to 500 billion in 2002. Moreover, this deficit involved practically all areas of production system. Even the surplus once enjoyed by the US in the area of high-technology goods, which stood at 35 billion in 1990, has now turned into a deficit. Competition between Ariane rockets and those of NASA, between Airbus and Boeing, testifies to the vulnerability of the American advantages. Faced by European and Japanese competition in high-technology products, by Chinese, Korean and other Asian and Latin American industrialised countries in competition for banal manufactured products, by Europe and the southern cone of Latin America in agriculture, the United States probably would not be able to win were it not for the 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 armaments sector, precisely because this sector largely operates outside the rules of the market and benefits from state support. This advantage probably brings certain benefits for the civil sphere in its wake (the Internet being the best-known example), but it also causes serious distortions that handicap many production sectors.

The North American economy lives parasitically to the detriment of its partners in the world system. "The United States depends for 10 per cent of its industrial consumption on goods whose import costs are not covered by the exports of its own products", as Emmanuel Todd recalls (9). The world produces, and the United States (which has practically no national saving) consumes. The "advantage" of the US is that of a predator whose deficit is covered by loans from others, whether consenting or forced. 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, Japan and the South (from oil-rich countries and comprador classes of every country of 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 on the periphery of the world system.

The 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: the 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 Junior.

The causes of the weakening of the US production system are complex. They are certainly not conjunctural, and they cannot be corrected by the adoption of a correct rate of exchange, 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 prejudice systematically in favour of the "private" to the detriment of the public service, is one of the main reasons for the profound crisis that the US society is going through.

One should, therefore, be surprised that the Europeans, far from drawing the conclusions that observation of the deficiencies of the US economy forces upon one, are actively going about imitating it. Here, too, the liberal virus does not explain everything, even if it fulfils some useful functions for the system in paralysing the 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.

• *Concerning the specific objectives of the project of the United States*

The hegemonic strategy of the United States is within the framework of the new collective Imperialism. The target is simply to establish the military control of the US forces over the Planet. This would guarantee to Washington a privileged special access to all the natural resources of the Earth, and through it would subordinate the allies and submit Russia, China and the Third world to the status of dependent states.

The "(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 counterpoint to this naïve and hollow discourse, the Mein Kampf of the new administration of Washington (The programme for a New American Century), it is acknowledged that the United States works hard for the right to seize all the natural resources of the planet to meet in priority its consumption requirements. The race for raw materials (oil in the first place, but as much for other resources too – water in particular) has already recovered all its virulence. All the more since these resources are likely to become scarce not only by the exponential cancer

of the wastage of Western consumption, but also by the development of the new industrialization of the peripheries.

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 an increasing weight. And it is not a question only of some East Asian countries (like Korea), but of immense 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. Because this expansion cannot absorb, under the conditions of the periphery, the enormous reserve of labour force, which is concentrated there. In fact the peripheries of the system remain the "zone of tempests". 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 its priorities requires.

Within this perspective, the American establishment has perfectly understood that, in the pursuit of its hegemony, it has three decisive advantages over its European and Japanese competitors: the control over the natural resources of the globe, the military monopoly, the weight of the "Anglo-Saxon culture" by which the ideological domination of capitalism is expressed preferentially. A systematic bringing into play of these three advantages clarifies many aspects of the US policy, in particular the systematic efforts that Washington exerts for the military control of the oil-producing Middle East, its offensive strategy with regard to Korea – taking advantage of this country's "financial crisis" – and to China, its subtle game aiming at perpetuating divisions in Europe – while mobilizing to this end its unconditional British ally - and at preventing any serious rapprochement between the European Union and Russia. At the level of the global control over the resources of the planet, the United States has a decisive advantage over Europe and Japan. Not only because the United States is the sole international military power, and thus no strong intervention in the Third World can be led without it. But more because Europe (excluding ex-USSR) and Japan are, themselves, divested of essential resources steadily from their economy. For example, their dependence in the energy sector, in particular their oil dependence with regard to the Gulf, is and will remain for a considerable long time, even if it were to decrease in relative terms. By militarily seizing the control of this region through Iraq war the US has demonstrated that they were perfectly conscious of the utility of this pressure medium, which it brings to bear on its allied-competitors. Not long ago the Soviet power had also understood this vulnerability of Europe and Japan; and certain Soviet interventions in the Third World had had as an aim of reminding it to them, so as to induce them to negotiate on other grounds. Evidently the deficiencies of Europe and Japan could be compensated in the event of a serious Europe-Russia rapprochement ("the common home" of Gorbachev). It is the very reason for which the danger of this construction of Eurasia becomes Washington's nightmare.

The military control of the Planet is – in last resort – the means for the USA to pump a tribute to its benefit through the use of political violence. This pumping should replace the "spontaneous" flow of capital which compensates the US deficit – the main reason for the vulnerability of the US hegemony. The target is therefore not to "open the markets on equal basis for all" (that rhetoric is left to the neo-liberal propagandists). Neither is it of course to promote democracy!

• *Concerning the conflicts that place the United States and its partners in the Triad opposite each other within this framework*

If the partners in the Triad share common interests in the global management of collective imperialism implied in their relationship with the South, they are certainly not less in a serious potential conflictual relationship.

The American superpower sustains itself due to the capital flow that feeds the parasitism of its economy and society. The vulnerability of the United States constitutes, therefore, a serious threat for the project of Washington.

Europe in particular, and the rest of the world in general, will have to choose one of the following two strategic options: to invest the "surplus" of their capital ("of saving") from which they arrange for financing the US deficit (consumption, investments and military expenditures); or conserve and invest this surplus at home.

The conventional economists are ignorant of the problem, having made the hypothesis (which is not anything, but a nonsense) that "globalisation" having abolished the nations, the economic grandeurs (saving and investment) cannot be managed any more "at national levels". It is a matter of a tautological reasoning where the conclusions at which one wishes to arrive are implied in the very premises: to justify and accept the financing of the US deficit by others since, at the world level, one finds indeed the saving-investment identity!

Why thus such ineptitude is accepted? No doubt, the teams "of scholarly economists" who encircle the European (and also, Russian and Chinese) political classes of the right as well as of the electoral left are themselves victims of their economic alienation, which I term as the "liberal virus". Besides, through this option in fact the political judgment of the large transnational capital is expressed which considers that the advantages got by the management of the globalised system by the United States on behalf of collective imperialism prevail over its disadvantages: the tribute which is needed to pay Washington for ensuring permanence. Because it was a tribute after all and not an "investment" with a good guaranteed return. There are some countries qualified as "poor indebted countries" which are always constrained to ensure the servicing of their debt at any price. But there is also a "powerful indebted country" which has the means enabling it to devalue its debt if it considers necessary.

The other option for Europe (and the rest of the world) would thus consist in putting an end to the transfusion in favour of the United States. The surplus could then be used on the original spot (in Europe) and the economy be revived. Because the transfusion requires a submission of Europeans to "deflationary" policies (improper term of the language of conventional economics) that I call as "stagnationist" – so as to release a surplus of exportable saving. It makes a recovery in Europe – always mediocre – dependent on an artificial support from that of the United States. The mobilization of this surplus in opposite direction for local employment in Europe would permit the simultaneous revival of consumption (by rebuilding the social dimension of the economic management devastated by the liberal virus), investment - and particularly in new technologies (and financing their research), even military expenditure (putting an end to the "advantages" of the United States in this field). The option in favour of this challenging response implies a rebalancing of the social relationships in favour of the labouring classes. National conflicts and social struggles are articulated in this



way. In other words, the contrast between the United States and Europe does not fundamentally oppose the interests of dominant segments of the capital of various partners.

The neo-liberal option of Europe, reinforced by a so called “apolitical” management of its currency (the Euro), does not help the continent moving out of stagnation. It is an absurd choice, perfectly convenient for Washington which manages its currency (the dollar) differently, with political sense ! Along with an eventual exclusive control of the US over oil this management permits to what I call the “oil-dollar standard” to be the only international currency in last resort, while the Euro remains a subaltern regional currency.

The political conflict which may develop between Europe (or some of the major European states) and the USA is not the product of major divergences between dominant capital. I locate this conflict elsewhere, in the domain of what could be called “national interests” and/or in the inheritance of different political cultures, which I discussed at length elsewhere.

• *Concerning the questions of theory that the preceding reflections suggest*

Complicity-competition between the partners in collective imperialism for the control over the South – the plundering of its natural resources and submission of its people – can be analysed from different angles of vision. I will make, in this respect, three observations, which appear major to me.

First observation: the contemporary world system that I describe as collective imperialist is not "less" imperialist than its precedents. It is not an "Empire" of “post-capitalist” nature. I have proposed elsewhere a criticism of ideological formulations of the "disguise" that feeds this fashionable dominant discourse.

I am referring here to the so called “post modernist” theses which invite to renounce to any attempt to act and “change the world”, to the benefit of a day to day adjustment to those changes produced by the deployment of capitalism. Hardt and Negri aligned on that thesis – which is the permanent discourse of American liberalism since ever – in a perspective – naïve in the best of the hypotheses – that the world will change to the better by its own logics.

Second observation: I have proposed a reading of the history of capitalism, globalised right from its origin, centred on the distinction between the various phases of imperialism (of centres/peripheries relationships). There exist of course other readings of this same history, in particular that which is articulated around the "succession of hegemonies".

I have some reservations with regard to this last reading.

Primarily and essentially because it is "western-centric" 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. I believe that the reactions of the people of the peripheries to the imperialist deployment should not be underestimated. For they are provoked, it would only be the independence of Americas, the great revolutions made in the name of socialism (Russia, China), the re-conquest of independence by the Asian and African countries, and I do not believe that one can account

for the history of world capitalism without accounting for the "adjustments" that these transformations imposed even on central capitalism itself.

Then because the history of imperialism appears to me having been made more through the conflict of imperialisms than by the type "of order" that successive hegemonies have imposed. The apparent periods "of hegemony" have been always extremely short and the said hegemony very relative.

Third observation: internationalisation is not synonymous with "unification" of economic system by "the de-regulated opening up of the markets". The latter – in its successive historical forms ("the freedom of trade" yesterday, the "freedom of firms" today) – always constituted the project of the dominant capital only. In reality this project was almost always forced to adjust with exigencies that are not the concern of its exclusive and specific internal logic. It thus could never be implemented except in some short moments of the history. The "free exchange" promoted by the major industrial power of its time – Great Britain – was effective only during two decades (1860-1880) which was succeeded by a century (1880-1980) characterized at the same time by the conflict between the imperialists and by the strong de-linking of the countries known as socialist (starting from the Russian revolution of 1917, then that of China) and more modestly the populist nationalist countries (the era of Bandung for Asia and Africa from 1955 to 1975). ). The current moment of reunification of the world market (the "free enterprise") inaugurated by neo-liberalism since 1980, extended to the whole planet with the Soviet collapse, probably is not destined to experience a better fate. The chaos which it generates - term by which I have described this system since 1990 - testifies to its character "of permanent utopia of capital".

## **5. Derailing the USA, Israel, and their allied countries in the front line ( Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Iran).**

The USA project, supported by its allied subordinates from Europe and by Israel, consists in establishing its military control all over the world. The «Middle East» has been chosen as the «first impact» target for four reasons: (I) there are the most plentiful oil resources in the world, and its direct control by the USA army would grant Washington a privileged situation and would make its allies –Europe and Japan– and its possible rivals (China) depend on them in terms of oil supplies; (II) it is located in the heart of the ancient world and would be suitable for a permanent military menace against China, India and Russia; (III) it is undergoing a stage of weakness and confusion which assures the aggressor at least an easy short-term success; (IV) in that region there is a USA unconditional ally, Israel, which has nuclear weapons.

To the countries in the front line the aggression brings about a situation of destruction (the first four countries) or menace (Syria and Iran).

### ***The aggression against Lebanon***

Israel's aggression against the people of Lebanon (july-august 2006) is part of Washington's plan for the whole region. The offer to liberate the two israeli soldiers captured on the territory of Lebanon against Lebanese detained in Israel after their having been highjacked in Lebanon, was therefore perfectly legitimate. The terrain for the aggression had been prepared by a UN resolution requesting the evacuation of the Syrian forces from Lebanon and the

“disarmament” of Hizbollah, following the assassination of Rafic el Hariri, on which full light has not been thrown. The USA and Europe insist for the integral application of that resolution, while they always had neglected any demand for the implementation of resolution 242 which demanded the evacuation of occupied Palestine since 1967 , as well as they have forgotten the illegal annexation of Golan. The double standard is more than visible.

Washington aims at establishing its total military control over the whole region, disguising the real target with talks on exporting democracy there, associated with a neo liberal order facilitating the plunder of its oil resources. Washington has also embraced zionist phantasms: the partition of the region into micro states based on ethnicity and religious differences, the exercise by Israel of a kind of protectorate on them, in company with US.

The implementation of the plan is well advanced: Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan have been destroyed and occupied, Syria and Iran are openly menaced after Lebanon. Nonetheless the failure of the project is visible: the resistance of the peoples is growing, Lebanon has given a lesson of unity supporting its freedom fighters, defeating in that respect the expectations of Tel Aviv, Washington and the Europeans. With rudiment armament, the Lebanese resistance has been able to create serious problems to the over equipped israeli army, fed by the US air bridge since Diego Garcia ‘ here appears the real role of the US bases throughout the planet). The Lebanese resistance having now proved its capacity to defeat the Israeli aggressor, all the efforts of the United States and of Europe are now concentrated on disarming it , in order to facilitate a “brilliant victory” for the next aggression of Israel! It is therefore time now to repeat that the right of peoples to prepare themselves to any intervention of the imperialists and of their agents by keeping themselves armed is a undeniable.

### *Afghanistan*

Afghanistan reached its best in modern history during the so-called «communist» Republic. It was a modern enlighten despotism regime, which favored education for children of both sexes, against obscurantism, thus strengthening the decisive basis of the society. Its «agrarian reform» was essentially a set of measures aiming the reduction of the tyrannical power of the tribal chiefs. The support –at least implicit– by the majority of the citizenship granted a possible success of that already oncoming evolution. The propaganda conveyed both by the Western media and the politic Islam presented that experience as a «communist atheist totalitarianism» rejected by the Afghan people. Indeed, just as that of Ataturk in his times, the regime was far from «unpopularity».

It is not surprising at all that its supporters, at least in its larger fractions (Khalq and Parcham) called themselves Communists. The paradigm of the achievements by the Soviet peoples of Central Asia (despite any criticism and the autocratic practices by that system), in contrast to the permanent British imperialism social disaster in the neighbor countries (India and Pakistan), had lead the patriots here and in many other regions to an acknowledgement of what a big obstacle imperialism was to any attempt of modernization. The invitation to an intervention, sent by some fractions to the Soviets, as an attempt to get rid of the others, has really had a negative impact and mortgaged the possibilities of the national-popular-modern project.

Specially, the USA, and generally speaking, its allies of the triad have been the stubborn adversaries of the Afghan parties of modernization, communist or not. They are the ones who

have mobilized the obscurantist forces of the political Islam, the Pakistani (Taliban) and the war lords (the chiefs of tribes, neutralized by the so-called «communist regime»), and have given them training and weapons. Even after the Soviet withdrawal, the resistance of the government of Najibullah to the assaults of the obscurantist forces would have probably not been defeated without the military Pakistani offensive which came to support the Taliban, stimulating chaos, and the reconstitution of the forces of the war lords.

Afghanistan is devastated by the military intervention by the USA, its allies and agents, particularly the Islamite. A reconstruction will not be possible as directed by these actors, a power hardly concealed by a clown with no roots in the country, encouraged by the Texan transnational where he had been an employee. The salvation of the fake «democracy» claimed by Washington, NATO and UN, is nothing but an attempt to legitimate their «presence» (occupation, indeed). It had always been a white lie; it has become a mean farce.

There is only one solution to the Afghan problem: that the foreign forces leave the country and that all the powers are forced not to give financial support and weapons to their «allies». To those good souls showing their fear that the Afghan tolerate a Taliban dictatorship (or a *war lords'* dictatorship), I would answer that the foreign presence was and still is the best support for such dictatorship! Also, the Afghan people went on a different direction – may be the best one – in the times when «the West» did not participate in their issues. The civilized West prefers the obscurantist despotism, rather than the enlighten autocracy, as it is less dangerous for their own interests!

### *Iraq*

The US armed diplomacy aimed at the goal of literally destroying Iraq, long before finding an excuse. First when Kuwait was invaded in 1990, and then after September 11, an event cynically and hypocritically manipulated by Bush junior following the Goebbels' principle («repeating a lie enough times, causes it to become true»). The reason is simple and has nothing to do with the discourse that claims the «freedom» of the Iraqi people from the (real) bloody dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. A major part of the world oil resources is under the Iraqi soil. Besides, Iraq would qualify scientific and technical cadres capable, due to their critical mass, to keep a consistent national project. This «danger» had to be eliminated by a «preventive war», something the USA has given itself the right to start whenever and wherever it finds it suitable, with no respect for the international «law».

Beyond this sample of common evidences, there are still some series of questions: (I) How could the plan of Washington show so easily the façade of a brilliant success? (II) What is the new situation created for the Iraqi nation ? (III) How do the different components of the Iraqi people face this challenge? (IV) What solutions can the Iraqi, Arab and international democratic and progressist forces provide?

It was possible to foretell the defeat of Saddam Hussein. Facing an enemy whose basic strength is that of exercising genocide by means of unpunished air bombing (expecting the use of nuclear bombing) there is only one effective answer the peoples can give: displaying resistance on their invaded place as the Lebanese people has proved it. Well, Saddam's regime devoted its effort to eliminate the means of defense the people could reach, by exterminating systematically every organization or political party (beginning by the communist) that had taken part in the modern history of Iraq, including the Baas itself, one of

the main actors in such history. Therefore one might not be surprised by the fact that the «Iraqi people» has allowed the invasion without fighting, or by certain behaviors (such as the supposed participation in the elections summoned by the invaders, or the upsurge of fratricide struggles between Kurds, Sunnite Arabs, and Shiite Arabs) which appear to indicate the acceptance of the defeat (calculated by Washington), but rather by the fact that the resistances on the battlefield go stronger everyday (in spite of the serious weaknesses these resistances have), that they have made impossible the establishment of a servile regime with a facade of «order», and that to some extent they have shown the failure of the Washington project. The fact that the tamed United Nations have recognised such a fake government does not change the truth; it is neither legitimate nor acceptable.

However, the military occupation creates a new situation. The Iraqi nation is really threatened. The project of Washington, unable to keep its control over the country (and plunder its oil resources, which is its main priority) by means of a «national» - looking government as an intermediary, could not be attained but by destroying the country. The division of the country into at least three «States» (Kurd, Sunnite Arab y Shiite Arab) could have been from the very beginning an objective of Washington, together with Israel (in the future the archives may reveal that). At present, «civil war» is always the card played by Washington when trying to legitimize keeping its occupation. Permanent occupation was – and still is – the objective: it is the only means for Washington to guarantee the control of oil. For sure one should not believe Washington «declarations» of will like «we will leave the country once order is restored». Let's remember the British said nothing since 1882 but that their occupation of Egypt was «provisional» (it lasted until 1956!). Meanwhile, everyday the USA destroys a bit more by all means, including the most criminal, the country, its schools, its factories, its scientific capacities.

The answer given by the Iraqi people as a response to this challenge does not seem – at least, up to now – suitable to the extreme severity of the circumstances. That is the least we could say. Why? The Western media repeat again and again that Iraq is an «artificial» country, and that the oppressive domination of the «Sunnite» regime of Saddam over Shiites and Kurds is the origin of the inevitable war (that the duration of the foreign occupation could maybe stop). The «resistance» in that case would be limited to some Islamist pro Saddam cells of the Sunnite «triangle». One could hardly be able to put so many lies together.

After World War I, it was difficult for the British colonization to face the Iraqi people's resistance. According to their imperial tradition, in order to keep their power, the British created an imported monarchy and a class of land owners, and gave Sunnite Islam a privileged position. The Communist party and the Baas were the main organized political forces which undermined the power of the «Sunnite» monarchy hated by everyone, Sunnites, Shiites and Kurds. The violent confrontation between both forces, being the focus of attention between 1958 and 1963, ended up with the victory of Baas, which the Western powers celebrated with relief. The communist project potentially implied a democratic evolution, not at all included by Baas. Baas was a nationalist pan Arab and unitarian party, admirer of the Prussian model of construction of the German unity, willing to summon the small modern laicizing bourgeoisie, hostile to the obscurantist trends of religion. It became, as it was possible to expect, a dictatorship only half anti imperialist, in the sense that, according to the conditions and circumstances, it was possible to reach a compromise between both parts (the Baas power in Iraq, and the American imperialism in the region). Such «compromise» encouraged the megalomaniac hopes of the leader, who believed Washington would accept becoming its main ally in the region. Washington support to Baghdad (also, with a provision

of chemical weapons) during the criminal and absurd war against Iran between 1980 and 1989 seemed to make that believable. Saddam had not imagined that Washington was lying, that the modernization of Iraq was unacceptable to imperialism, and destroying the country was already a decision. Once in the trap (Saddam had been allowed to annex Kuwait, indeed an Iraqi province that the British imperialists had detached in order to make it one of its oil producing colonies) Iraq suffered for ten years sanctions designed to weaken the country and pave the way to an easy “glorious conquer” by the American troops.

We could impute the successive Baas regimes, even that of the last stage of its decay under the «direction» of Saddam, for everything but having stimulated the religious conflict between Sunnites and Shiites. Then, who is responsible for the wounds that today make an opposition between the two communities? For sure one day we will know how the CIA (and undoubtedly the Mossad) organized many of these massacres. Yet it is true that the political desert created by Saddam’s regime and his example in terms of opportunistic methods without principles «stimulated» the candidates in power to follow the same way, often protected by the occupants, sometimes maybe naïve enough to believe they could «use» the occupants. The candidates, «religious» chiefs (Shiites or Sunnites), paratribals headmen, or «business men» outstandingly corrupted and exported from the USA, never had real roots in the country. The same can be said about the religious chiefs respected by the believers, they had not had any political activity acceptable to the Iraqi people. Were it not for the void left by Saddam, their names would have never been mentioned. In the context of this new «political world» built by the liberal globalization imperialism, will the other political forces, authentically popular and national, eventually democratic, have the means for a reconstitution?

There was a time when the Communist Party was the space for the best produced by the Iraqi society. The Communist Party was based all over the country, was the most widespread among the intellectuals, particularly those of Shiite origin (in my opinion Shiism produces revolutionaries and religious leaders, and seldom bureaucrats or compradores!). The Communist Party was authentically popular and anti imperialist, hardly inclined to demagogy, potentially democratic. Is it now doomed to definitely disappear from history, after the Baas dictatorships massacred thousands of its best militants, the USSR collapsed (something it was not prepared for), and some intellectuals thought it was acceptable to come back from exile in the vans of the American troops? That is not impossible, yet it is not «inevitable». It is far from being so.

The «Kurd» problem is a real one, in Iraq, Iran, and in Turkey. But on this issue we should remember that the Western powers have always put into practice, with the same cynicism, the rule of double standard. In Iraq or Iran, the repression to the Kurds’ claims has never reached the degree of violence (military or by the police) than that of Ankara. Neither Iran nor Iraq has denied the existence of the Kurds as Ankara did. However, Turkey has been forgiven, a member of NATO – an organization of democratic nations, as the mass media remind us, in which that outstanding democrat, Salazar, got involved as a founder member, the same as those no less unconditional supporters of democracy, the Greek colonels and the Turkish generals!

The Iraqi popular fronts constituted around the Communist Party and the Baas in the best stage of their history, every time they exercised responsibilities of power did found a place for understanding with the main Kurd parties, which have always been their allies.

The «anti Shiite» and the «anti Kurd» acts of Saddam regime are a truth: Saddam's army bombed the region of Basorah after their defeat in Kuwait in 1990; gas has been used against the Kurds. Yet these actions came in «response» to the moves by Washington armed democracy, which had mobilized the wizard apprentices eager to take the chance. Nonetheless they were stupid and criminal choices since the appeals of Washington had a limited force. But, is there anything else we could expect from a dictator as Saddam?

At the same time the powerful image of the resistance against the foreign occupation, is something «unexpected» in these conditions, almost a “miracle”. That is not the case. The elementary reality is simply that the Iraqi people as a whole (Arab and Kurd, Sunnite and Shiite) hates the occupants and has been aware of their everyday crimes (murders, bombing, massacres, tortures). We should then expect a Resistance United Front (call it as you please), self defined as such, that publishes the names, lists of organizations and parties involved, and their common program. Up to now, there is no such thing. Especially because of all those reasons brought about by the social and political destruction caused by the occupants and by Saddam's earlier dictatorship. But whatever the reasons, such lack is a severe shortage, which favors division, encourages the opportunists, and stimulates confusion in the objectives of liberation.

Who will overcome these weaknesses? Communists must be willing to make it happen. Militants –already present at the field– make their difference as opposed to those «leaders» (the only ones the mass media seem to know!) who do not really know what way to take and attempt to give an appearance of legitimacy to their «alignment» to the collaboration government, pretending to be a complement to the actions by the armed resistance!! However, many other political forces, according to the circumstance, could take initiatives aimed at the creation of that front.

Still, despite its «weaknesses» the Iraqi resistance has already derailed (politically speaking, not militarily speaking yet) Washington project. This is precisely what worries the Atlantists of the European Union, its faithful allies. Washington subordinated associates fear the defeat of the USA because that would strengthen the capacity of the peoples of the South to have the globalized transnational capital of the imperialist triad ( US, Europe and Japan) respect the interests of the nations and peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Iraqi resistance has made proposals that could avoid the dead end and encourage the USA to leave the wasps nest. It proposes: (I) the constitution of a transitional administrative authority supported by the Security Council; (II) the immediate cease of the actions by the resistance, and of the interventions (military and by the police) by the occupation troops; (III) that all the military and civil foreign authorities leave the country within 6 months. The details of these proposals appeared in the prestigious Arab magazine *Al Mustaqbal Al Arabi*, published in Beirut, January 2006.

The European mass media total silence about the message shows, from this outlook, solidarity among imperialists. The European democratic and progressist forces should oppose this strategy of the imperialist triad and support the proposals by the Iraqi resistance. Leaving the Iraqi people alone, as it faces its enemy, is not an acceptable choice: it entails the dangerous idea that there is nothing to expect from the West and its countries and, in term, stimulates unacceptable trends –criminal, indeed– in the practices by certain resistance movements.

The stronger the support to the Iraqi people by the democratic forces from Europe and the world, the sooner the occupation troops will leave the country; the stronger will be the possibilities of a better future for that martyr people. The more the occupation remains, the darker will be the future after its inevitable end.

### *Palestine*

Since the famous declaration of Balfour, during world war one, the Palestinian people is a victim of a foreign colonial project, experiencing the fate of the «red skins», something as ignored as recognized. Such project has always been supported unconditionally by the imperialist power dominating in the region (first Great Britain, then the USA); since the creation of a country foreign to the region could be nothing other than the creation of an unconditional supporter of the continuous interventions aiming the submission of the Arab Middle East to the imperialist capitalist domination.

Understanding that is commonplace to all the peoples of Africa and Asia for whom the defense of the rights of the Palestinian people is spontaneous. In contrast, in Europe the «Palestinian problem» brings about a division caused by the confusion encouraged by the Zionist ideology, which usually finds here favorable echoes.

More than never before, the display of the American project of the «great Middle East» entailed the abolishment of the Palestine people's rights. Meanwhile, the PLO had accepted the plans of Oslo and Madrid, and the route designed by Washington. It was Israel who openly rejected to sign, and put into practice an expansion plan even more ambitious! The PLO was in turn weakened: it would be fair saying it naively believed in its adversaries' honesty. The support given to the Islamic adversary ( Hamas) by the israeli authorities – at least, at first –, the chain of corrupted practices performed by the Palestinian administration (obviated by the «financial donors» -the World Bank, Europe, many NGOs) would lead – it could be foretold (and it was possibly desired) – to the electoral success of Hamas, a complementary excuse immediately used to justify the unconditional support to Israeli politics «whatever they were»!

The Zionist colonial project has always been a threat, both for Palestine and for the Arab neighbor countries. Some proofs are its interest in annexing the Egyptian Sinai, and its effective annexation of the Syrian Golan. In the «great Middle East» project, there is a special place for Israel, the regional monopoly of its military nuclear equipment, and its role as «obligatory partner», using the excuse that Israel had «technological capacities», something no Arab country is able to achieve! ( an evidence of the spontaneous racism of the imperialist ideologues).

Our intention here is not to suggest analyses concerning the complex interactions between the struggles against the Zionist colonial expansion and the conflicts and political choices in Lebanon and Syria. The regimes of Baas in Syria resisted in their way the demands of the political powers and Israel. That this resistance had equally been useful to legitimize the most questionable ambitions (the control of Lebanon) is not questionable. On the other hand Syria carefully chose its «allies» among the «less dangerous» in Lebanon. It is known that the resistance to Israeli moves in South Lebanon (including the deviation of water) had been lead by the Lebanese Communist Party. The Syrian, Lebanese and Iranian powers collaborated in order to destroy this «dangerous basis» and substitute that of Hezbollah. The murder of Rafic el Harriri – far from being clear – apparently gave the imperialist powers (United States in the



front, France back) the chance for an intervention with two objectives: making Damas accept a definite alignment to the group of servile Arab Estates (Egypt, Saudi Arabia) –or, at least, eradicate the remains of degenerated Baas power -, eliminate the remains of the capacity to resist the Israeli moves (demanding the «disarmament» of Hezbollah). The speech about «democracy» can be quoted, in this context, in case it is useful.

At present, defending the legitimate rights of the Palestine people is a main duty to all democrats worldwide. Palestine is at the center of the greatest conflicts of our times. Accepting the Israeli plan of destroying the whole Palestine and its people would be the same as denying the peoples their first right: the right to exist. Accusing of «anti Semitism» those against the completion of such project is unacceptable.

### **Iran**

It is not our objective to make the analysis the «Islamic revolution» suggests. Being the way it defines itself and how it is usually seen by political Islam, or by «foreign observers», i.e. the announcement and starting point for an evolution that in the end should comprise the whole region, in fact, the whole «Muslim world», then rebaptized as « the *umma* » («nation», what it has never been). Or was it a special event, particularly because it is suitable for the combination of interpretations of the Shiite Islam and that of the expression of Iranian nationalism?

From the point of view we are interested in, I will only make a couple of comments. First, the political Islam regime in Iran is not in its roots incompatible with the integration of the country to the world capitalist system as such (the principles on which it relies find their way in a vision of a «liberal» management of economy). Second, Iran is a «strong nation»; in other words, its best components, if not all of them – popular classes and leaders – do not accept the integration of the country as a dominated nation within the world System. There is an obvious contradiction between these two dimensions of the Iranian reality and the second explains those trends of the foreign policy of Teheran showing a will to reject the foreign commands.

It is Iranian nationalism –strong and, in my opinion, historically positive– what explains the success of the «modernization» of the scientific, industrial, technological and military capacities, started up by the successive regimes of Shah and Khomeinism. Iran is one of those rare States of the South (together with China, India, Korea, Brazil, and maybe some others, but not many more!) which enjoys the conditions to have a «national bourgeois» project. Whether the completion of that project is, in the long run, possible or not (and this is my opinion) is not the focus of this presentation. Today such project exists; it is there.

Because Iran constitutes a critical mass capable of an attempt to impose itself as an independent partner, the USA decided to destroy the country by means of a new «preventive war». As we know, the «conflict» takes place in the area of the nuclear capacities Iran has been developing. Will not this country, the same as any other, have the right to become a military nuclear power? Is there any right for the imperialist powers, and its puppet Israel, to aim at controlling the monopoly of the massive destruction weapons? Can we believe the speech according to which the «democratic» nations will not use such weapons as the «criminal states» could? When will we hear that such «democratic» nations are responsible for the bigger genocide of modern times, including that of the Jews, and that the USA already used the atomic weapon and reject the general and absolute prohibition to use it? Unfortunately, the European are aligned to the Washington project for aggressing Iran.

### **As a conclusion**

At present, three groups of forces are involved in the «political conflicts» operating in the area: those that claim a nationalist past (but are nothing but the corrupted and degenerated heirs of the bureaucracies of the nationalist-populist earlier stage), those who belong to the political Islam family, those that tend to emerge as related to «democratic» demands compatible with the liberal management of economy. The power of none of these forces is acceptable for a left thought aware of the interests of the nation and the popular classes. In fact, the interests of the compradore classes dominate in these three «families». Trying to «get involved» in their internal conflicts, searching for the alliances with this one here or that one there (preferring the established regimes so as to avoid the political Islam alternative; or looking for an alliance with some Islamic movements so as to get rid of the regimes) is doomed. The left should keep on supporting the struggles in those areas where it finds its own place: in defending the economic and social interests of the popular classes, democracy, and the consolidation of a national sovereignty, as inseparable targets. All democrats of the world should support the chances of the progressive forces and, in the same spirit, condemn without limits any intervention by the USA, NATO, Israel, the tamed United Nations, and their allies in the region.

The «Great Middle East» is nowadays essential in the conflict that opposes the imperialist Center and all the peoples of the world. Derailing Washington project there is a condition to encourage the possibilities of all the avant-gardes worldwide. Without this the avant-gardes would be extremely vulnerable. That does not mean under estimating the importance of other struggles in other parts of the world –Europe, Latin America. It just means that these struggles should be inserted into a global perspective, contributing to derail Washington interests in the region chosen as its criminal target number one.

### **Conclusion: the Empire of chaos and the Permanent war**

The project of the US domination – the extension of Monroe doctrines to the entire planet - is disproportionate. This project, that I qualified for this reason as the Empire of chaos since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, will be fatally confronted with the rise of growing resistance of the nations of the old world not ready to be subjected to it. The United States then will have to behave like a "Rogue State" par excellence, substituting the international law with a recourse to the permanent war (starting with the Middle-East, but aiming beyond that, to Russia and Asia), slipping on the fascist slope (the "patriotic law" has already given powers to the police force, equal to those of Gestapo, with regard to foreigners – “aliens”).