

# Back to No Future?

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After ages during which the earth produced harmless trilobites and butterflies, evolution progressed to the point at which it generated Neros, Genghis Khans, and Hitlers. This, however, is a passing nightmare; in time the earth will become again incapable of supporting life, and peace will return. (Bertrand Russell)

From a realist point of view, world affairs can be analyzed somewhat credibly, because realists tend to be more honest about political dishonesty than liberals. They concede, for example, that the highest component in international relations is not survival but hegemony. Case in point: “survival rarely is at stake in international relations. It simply is not true that the ‘struggle for power is identical with the struggle for survival’.” (Donnelly in Burchill, 2005: 51) They also concede that moral considerations are ignored or rejected by states. Case in point: “Realism maintains that universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states.” (Ibid.: 31) One would be hard pressed to find similar admissions among bleeding heart liberals.

## **The Cold War revisited**

First, it is necessary to set up as a framework the essence of the most important Cold War document, NSC 68, authored by the well-known realist policymaker Paul Nitze, from 1950. The most striking feature of this formerly-secret-now-declassified study is that it *assumes an offensive posture*. Be that as it may, doctrinal purity necessitated portraying the Soviet Union as the ‘slave state,’ and the US as the defender of ‘civilization itself.’ They are, by their very nature, polar opposites. The basic design of the ‘inescapably militant...slave state’ is ‘the complete subversion or forcible destruction of the machinery of government and structure of society’ everywhere (an extremely ironic charge that is wholly unsustainable in the light of the excessively authoritarian nature of Soviet *statist* power, since it is not in the interests of even the most militant states to destroy the machinery of government anywhere), in order to gain ‘absolute authority over the rest of the world’ and ‘total power over all men.’ This ‘implacable purpose’ and ‘compulsion’ is an essential property of the slave state, evidence being irrelevant (hence not adduced, since orthodoxy conveniently escapes the necessary standards of evidence, thanks to a starry eyed commissar class who can always be counted on to automatically serve the interests of external power, very much like a really well-trained circus dog that does its somersaults without the trainer having to crack his whip). Accordingly, the paths of diplomacy are excluded by definition, except as a guise to placate public opinion (also in Kissinger, 1994: 120). No accommodation can be conceivable, so the enemy must be destroyed, by virtue of its essential nature, since it is bent on world domination at any cost, while the Free World is burdened with the noble and saintly task of defending—and extending the reaches of—the principles of “freedom and justice” by the most violent means (killing millions in the process), international law ironically being an obstacle in pursuit of such saintly objectives.

## **Different Cold War explanations from a realist perspective**

Much to his credit, Samuel Huntington acknowledged eight years before the Cold War officially ended a crucial fact about the period 1945-81[1] (which applies to the remainder years of the official Cold War as

well; post-Cold War, the threat of terror, largely an outgrowth of US violence in the Middle East and Central Asia, directed at Western interests is what has been invoked to justify Western state terrorism): “you may have to sell [intervention or other military action] in such a way as to create the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting. That is what the US has been doing ever since the Truman Doctrine.” (Huntington, 1981: 14) But the overriding concern during the official Cold War—meaning it is still operative, since the Cold War has been more a war against humanity (read ‘international class war’) than a simple East-West conflict, having been fought since 1917 with the blood of “expendable” people over strategic resources. It has been a war fought by the West against people trying to improve their position in the world (John Pilger), which, if allowed to succeed, would weaken, or in the worst case scenario bring an end to, Western hegemony—has been to keep the world safe for private tyrannies (the large transnationals), which has entailed maintaining, and, when possible, widening the gap between the haves and have-nots, per George Kennan’s recommendations in his *Policy Planning Study 23*.<sup>[2]</sup>

Economic growth in the former Soviet Union under Stalin was so substantial that Western leaders were quite worried by what this entailed for the Third World, implication-wise, since the temptation to emulate it would be strong (Stalin’s monstrous human rights record was never an issue for Western leaders! Truman liked and admired Stalin; he even thought he was an honest leader, despite the fact that he had presided over one of the worst mass-slaughters in history, domestically. Churchill admired him, too. What was important for these men of honor was to get their way most of the time, meaning crimes were not of great consequence for them; disobedience was—the same is true today). Specifically, communism promised industrial development and a substantial increase in living standards in a *single* generation (which capitalism has never been able to do; it has taken centuries for the West to achieve this [even with all the material gains from plunder of the South], according to Hans Morgenthau: arguably the most distinguished representative of the state religion and a hard-headed ‘realist’). So it naturally had to be demonized, given its reasonably strong appeal to underdeveloped countries, whose populations, most living on the edge of survival, could not care less about ideology and what kind of system their leadership adopted, so long as it could improve their living conditions, even if only potentially. This is why anti-communism should be understood as a crusade against development, an observation that goes back to the outstanding British economist Joan Robinson: “[T]he United States crusade against Communism is a campaign against development. By means of it the American people have been led to acquiesce in the maintenance of a huge war machine and its use by threat or actual force to try to suppress every popular movement that aims to overthrow ancient or modern tyranny and begin to find a way to overcome poverty and establish national self-respect.” (Robinson in Houghton, 1967: 134)

The “war on terror” was declared in 1981, when the Reagan administration came into office, and was used to frighten the population into obedience for the destruction of independent development in Central America, and for other purposes elsewhere in the world. The re-declared “war on terror” 20 years later does not really seek to reduce the threat of terror – on the contrary, it exacerbates the threat, as has been anticipated, step by step, by main analysts. It does keep the US population subdued, and supportive of policies that are harmful to them, and to much of the world, but beneficial to narrow sectors of power. It sufficed to win the 2004 election, as it did in 2002. That includes undermining independent development, but a great deal more than that.

That said, let’s take a synoptic look at other official versions of the ways and the extent to which the Cold War was explained. Thus we read in Kissinger’s *Reflections on Containment* (largely an adaptation of NSC 68): “Acheson [...] presented [...] a bleak future in which the forces of communism stood to gain the upper hand... Not since Rome and Carthage had there been such a polarization of power on this earth. ... For the United States to take steps to strengthen countries threatened with Soviet aggression or

communist subversion...was to protect the security of the United States—it was to protect freedom itself.” (Kissinger, 1994: 117) Again, no evidence is given to substantiate this claim, nor is a two-way moral lens applied, thereby sustaining the official view that the US is by its very nature the beacon of light. Thus “the global struggle [is] between democracy and dictatorship... ‘Our way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections and the suppression of personal freedoms.’” (Ibid.: 117-8)[3]

Kennan claimed (in Kissinger, 1994: 120) that the Soviet Union would prove impervious to conciliatory Western policies. This is a bold-faced lie, since Western policies were not conciliatory, but also because Soviet policies were conciliatory (given the disproportionate preponderance of US power), towards which the US was disdainful.[4]

Much to his credit, “Henry Wallace [...] denied America the moral right to undertake the policy of containment in the first place” (ibid.: 123), refusing to accept the premises of containment for moral reasons (since those policies were considered too bellicose by him and his followers’ view—ibid.:129), a position for which he paid dearly (e.g., he was not able to garner many votes during his presidential candidacy in 1948. Ibid.: 128), since he saw no reason to destroy the sphere of influence exerted by the Soviet Union in a bipolar context, given the much wider and more pernicious sphere of influence exerted by the US. The likes of Nitze, seeing no reason to shrink the adversary’s sphere, since that would be construed as appeasement, were bent on destruction, while the likes of Wallace, a rare breed, courageously adopted a two-way moral lens that necessitated applying the same—if not greater—standards to ‘self’ as to the ‘other.’[5]

The long and short of it is that the Cold War was built around a balance of power (which of course had, despite everything, a stabilizing quality and effect—Morgenthau in Williams et al., 2006: 246), mainly based on a bipolar structure, in which Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) could ensue, despite the asymmetry in military and economic power. In point of fact, the USSR was vastly superior “in what are now called the conventional arms,” while the US was vastly superior in nuclear power (ibid.: 126).[6] But the MAD doctrine did, nevertheless, have a realistic basis, since a first strike wouldn’t necessarily have completely wiped out the adversary, so that it would have been possible to engage in a counterstrike in order to inflict damage on more or less the same scale.

To conclude this section, the Soviet Union *was mostly a regional* empire (hence barely expansive, thereby rendering the term ‘containment strategy’ highly dubious), *was evil*, and *was brutal*. But if we are to analyze the Cold War through a two-way moral lens, as we well should (unless we are total hypocrites), the American Empire *was and is truly a global* empire (hence necessarily *very* expansive, as evidenced by the hundreds of military bases around the world and the ubiquitous presence of US corporate power everywhere—the two go hand-in-hand, of course, since the system is predicated violence, in order to protect the crucial freedom to rob), *was and is even more evil*, and *was and is even more brutal*.[7] The implication is clear enough: both communism and capitalism are basically indistinguishable from fascism (if fascism is to be understood as any type of politico-economic arrangement that benefits a minority at the expense of the majority), with the proviso that capitalism has caused far more deprivation, suffering and death than communism throughout the 20th century[8]—no small achievement, since the number of deaths attributed to Soviet tyranny during the 20th century is around 100 million (as Stephane Courtois et al. show in *The Black Book of Communism*). Since

orthodoxies are impervious to reason, it is not likely that these facts will ever penetrate elite consciousness, since elitism virtually demands depravity.

## **Globalization**

If globalization is to be defined in terms of growing international interconnectedness (e.g., increasing flows of trade, transnational investments and different forms of high tech communications between nations, hence as “increasing trade interdependency and investment integration”), then it has been happening for the past 50 years (Hirst & Thompson, 2002: 247, 256).[9] But it is more illuminating to define the investor-based version of globalization as a major attack on democracy, according to Chomsky: “What’s called globalization is kind of a cover for the shifting of decision-making away from instruments of popular sovereignty (like governments and in the more democratic countries that means the public to some extent), shifting of the decisions away from them into private tyrannies, which is what corporations are. So as decisions are shifted to investors, lenders, banks, manufacturing corporations and so on (which is what globalization is in fact, this form of it), that is an attack on popular sovereignty, and it’s intended that way. So financial liberalization, which is a big piece of the current globalization system, that creates what’s called sometimes a virtual parliament, which has veto power over national planning. It can exercise that power simply by attacking currencies and withdrawing capital. And that constrains what governments can do. And in democratic states that means it constrains what people can do. It means you can’t carry out social and economic planning which will be aimed for the welfare of people.” (Transcribed from Youtube)

Even though so-called ‘anti-globalization movements’ have justifiably been against the corporate version of globalization including the monopolization of markets and raw materials, even making some strides against these anti-democratic practices during the pre-war period (ibid.) and more recently when activists blocked fast-track legislation (this is a reference to legislation that gives the executive branch the right negotiate trade agreements in secret, without Congressional participation. Congress is then allowed to say yes or no. So basically it’s deeply undemocratic), “Globalization was restored by military force and national policy,” meaning “it was not a ‘natural state of affairs. It also rested on a huge asymmetry” (ibid.: 249) between the dominant (hence exploitative) North and the subordinate (hence pauperized) South. The costs the US was willing to absorb to restore globalization to the benefit of its own ruling elite and its most favored allies was done by socializing risks and costs while privatizing profit, through the Pentagon system (a subsidy system for the rich and powerful), contrary to Hirst’s & Thompson’s claim. To their credit, however, they duly recognize the inherently rotten dynamics of globalization, by pointing to America’s miserly aid program (the lowest relative to GDP among the rich industrialized nations), its promotion of “trade liberalization in areas where it has a huge competitive advantage,” and its unwillingness to “open its own markets in key sectors or to allow national strategies of protection for emerging ‘competing’ industries in developing countries.” (Ibid.) These observations are valid, since every country that developed and industrialized did so by radically violating free-market rules, through highly protectionist measures, like subsidies, tax concessions, high tariffs, etc. As they note, “Current WTO rules prohibits such [protectionist] strategies and force most developing countries into manufacturing for export markets in relatively low-value niches” (ibid.). Which ensures that they remain in a subordinate position (since it is through export platforms that the wealth of Third World countries is expropriated.[10]), while being forced to continue servicing their illegitimate debts to the rich industrial nations.[11]

## Unipolarity

When it comes to unipolarity, even though the Cold War is gladly *officially* over and even though American unilateralism is nothing new, we have nevertheless entered an age of more naked unilateralism and constant or near-constant conflict (Mearsheimer, 1990: 52),<sup>[12]</sup> the threats of which cannot be exaggerated. As Samuel Huntington duly warned (as has Nye, 2002: 546, Waltz, 1990: 743, and Mearsheimer, 1994-5: 9; though not in as many words), in this context, in the March/April 1999 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Washington is treading a dangerous course: “While the United States regularly denounces various countries as ‘rogue states,’ in the eyes of many countries it is becoming the rogue superpower,” considered “as the single greatest external threat to their societies.” Realist “international relations theory” predicts, he argued, that coalitions may arise to “counter the emergence of a single hegemon,” in this case, “the rogue superpower.”<sup>[13]</sup> Which appears to have been happening post-Iraq’s last invasion particularly: During the Bush II years (Obama’s policies appear to be very much a continuation of ‘business as usual’), Washington planners were facing the possibility of the ultimate nightmare: “For the US, the primary issue in the Middle East has been, and remains, effective control of its unparalleled energy resources. Access is a secondary matter. Once the oil is on the seas it goes anywhere. Control is understood to be an instrument of global dominance. Iranian influence in the “crescent” challenges US control. By an accident of geography, the world’s major oil resources are in largely Shia areas of the Middle East: southern Iraq, adjacent regions of Saudi Arabia and Iran, with some of the major reserves of natural gas as well. Washington’s worst nightmare would be a loose Shia alliance controlling most of the world’s oil and independent of the US. Such a bloc, if it emerges, might even join the Asian Energy Security Grid based in China. Iran could be a lynchpin. If the Bush planners bring that about, they will have seriously undermined the US position of power in the world.” (Chomsky, 2007)

These developments may be almost inevitable given the rotten dynamics of statecraft, the aggressive nature of state capitalism and the cynical nature of *realpolitik*. The solution would be fairly simple if formal democratic structures were not as defective and dysfunctional as they are. John Rawls laid out some sound principles through which justice could be attained under the status quo if contempt for democracy didn’t run so deep among public interest pretenders: “...I believe the principles of justice between free and democratic peoples will include certain familiar principles long recognized as belonging to the law of peoples, among them the following:

1. Peoples (as organized by their governments) are free and independent, and their freedom and independence is to be respected by other peoples.
2. Peoples are equal and parties to their own agreements.
3. Peoples have the right of self-defense but no right to war.
4. Peoples are to observe a duty of nonintervention.
5. Peoples are to observe treaties and undertakings.
6. Peoples are to observe certain specified restrictions on the conduct of war (assumed to be in self-defense).
7. Peoples are to honor human rights.” (Rawls, 1993: 43)

Putting aside the question-begging in point 1 (since people can never really be free and independent as long as they are governed), it is reasonable to assume that these steps would be a much needed corrective to the extremely dangerous path that the West has been treading for so long, if only “government of the people, by the people, for the people” were not a joke in bad taste, since those who govern have always done so primarily in their own interests and in the interests of barbarians of money (the propertied

classes). The measures that Rawls outlines amount, therefore, to a “letter to Santa Claus,” given the predatory nature of states and the totalitarian corporations they serve and protect. But this should not be construed to mean that inaction is justified. Reforms under existing power are necessary in the short run, since there is a margin of survival in the South particularly that can benefit from reforms, however limited.

### **Conflict patterns**

Hirst & Thompson duly recognize that conflicts between less developed states will increasingly be over access to resources and trade (Hirst & Thompson, 2002: 254). Similarly, Sadowski claims: “The great majority of conflicts in the world today are not “clashes of civilizations” but fratricides that pit old neighbors, often from similar or identical cultures, against each other. Most ethnic conflicts are not the irrational result of “ageless tribal rivalries” but recent and rational quarrels over the distribution of resources” (Sadowski in Williams et al., 2006: 625) This makes perfect sense, because with or without direct and indirect interference from the West (and/or from the East during the Cold War), most armed conflicts on the African continent (and arguably elsewhere in the Third World) have been *intra*-state (Davidson, 1992: 166; Tilly, 1991: *passim*). And even though they have had the appearance of ethnic, ethno-nationalistic and/or religious based dynamics on the surface, at bottom they have been a struggle for control of the institutions of the failed state system, through which resources can nevertheless be controlled.[14] (It is, after all, by undemocratically depriving ordinary citizens of those very resources that powerful groups are able to fatten their wallets, stomachs and asses while the starving multitude languishes in traditional misery, dropping like flies by the tens of millions every year, with hardly anyone absolutely or comparatively privileged even batting an eyelash, in true gangster form!)

When it comes to conflict patterns between strong versus weak states, all the countries (literally dozens) that have been attacked by the US (*without provocation*) during the post-UN Charter period have been weak and defenseless, if their leaders were defiant and if they were worth the trouble by virtue of rich natural resources, cheap labor and/or key markets (in contrast, the USSR attacked only 3 countries during the Cold War [if I am not mistaken]: Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, though it became involved in other already existing Third World conflicts in complicated ways). Post-Cold War, the whole Third World has become fair game for the US, since the Soviet deterrent, which afforded at least minimal but important constraints to Pax Americana, no longer exists (this should not be construed as apologetics for Soviet power. Recall that both systems are fascistic, and the Soviet system was *not* socialistic in the true sense of the expression, since the essence of socialism has always been understood in the left libertarian tradition to be *direct as opposed to proxy control by the workers over production* [which will result in collective enjoyment of social capital, the instruments of labor and the products of the labor performed]. That’s the *core*. That’s where socialism *begins*. Then you go on to other things.).

In sum, the realist position when it comes to explaining conflict patterns is more pessimistic albeit more accurate than the liberal one, since it, at least implicitly, acknowledges the cynicism involved behind the inherently aggressive and militant actions of every state, the more so the more powerful they are (Lasswell, 1958: 8). The long and short of it is that the primacy of the war machine renders actual or potential threats irrelevant,[15] due to America’s permanent war economy since WWII, which has been of paramount importance for keeping the economy afloat for the ruling gangsters—war is, after all, a racket, as it always has been.[16] It has indeed been a constant theme in US military-industrial-ideological policy to fabricate an endless series of enemies for domestic purposes, to properly frighten the population, who would otherwise never tolerate the undemocratic program of public subsidy and private profit called ‘free

enterprise.’ (This is also true of the Soviet Empire, albeit on a much smaller scale and less constantly, since the Soviet Union was a junior partner in world management.)

A top priority for human rights and peace activists, and the left generally (meaning for any decent person who is concerned about the fate of the planet), is not to ignore the causal factors that lie behind states’ need to make war. Such persons will try to understand “why states devote their resources to improving the technology of destruction, why they seek international confrontation and undertake violent intervention. If these reasons are not addressed, a terminal conflict is a likely eventuality; only the timing is in doubt. It is suicidal to concentrate solely on plugging holes in the dike without trying to stem the flood at its source. For us, that means changing the structures of power and dominance that impel the state to crush moves towards independence and social justice within our vast domains and that constantly drive it towards militarization of the economy.” (Chomsky, 1985: 250)

### **Nuclear folly**

Even though we should all be grateful that the Cold War is officially over, still, that is no reason for complacent ignorance and passivity, since the world is still a very troubled place with widespread and significant cauldrons of animosities boiling between states, as well as socioeconomic and environmental catastrophes globally, actual and potential (Chomsky, 2003: *passim*). It is not at all a given that the status quo can be perpetuated for long (despite the fact that the US has no *immediate* rivals in site [Brooks & Wohlforth in Williams et al., 2006: 705]), since we appear to be living close to if not within the margins of survival. The greatest threats are cataclysmic climate change, global nuclear holocaust and global poverty, the consequences of the latter being a matter which minimally decent people ought to try eliminating in the long term (naturally, the short term goal should be to try mitigating those consequences), by completely re-organizing the deeply undemocratic economic system of the West and the international order. Those who entertain the notion that the threat of nuclear war has been greatly reduced thanks to the fall of the Soviet empire understand very little about how things work in the world. The irony is that Cold War thinking has persisted doggedly since the official demise of the Cold War, with the threat of nuclear war higher than ever, and likely to continue growing if we let the current social order evolve along its current paths.

Consider, for example, the sobering words of the former head of the US Strategic Command (STRATCOM), General George Lee Butler. He wrote that he was, throughout his long professional military career, “among the most avid of these keepers of the faith in nuclear weapons. ... And now it is my burden to declare with all of the conviction I can muster that in my judgment they served us extremely ill.” (Butler, 2006: 763; he outlines the reasons on the following page) He continues: “from the earliest days of the nuclear era, the risks and consequences of nuclear war have never been properly weighed by those who brandished it. [T]he stakes of nuclear war engage not just the survival of the antagonists, but the fate of mankind. [T]he likely consequences of nuclear war have no politically, militarily or morally acceptable justification. And, therefore, ...the threat to use nuclear weapons is indefensible.” (Ibid.: 764-5) Then he raises a poignant question: “By what authority do succeeding generations of leaders in the nuclear-weapons states usurp the power to dictate the odds of continued life on our planet? Most urgently, why does such breathtaking audacity persist at a moment when we should stand trembling in the face of our folly and united in our commitment to abolish its most deadly manifestation?” (Ibid.: 765) And finally he opines: “We cannot at once keep sacred the miracle of existence and hold sacrosanct the capacity to destroy it. We cannot hold hostage to sovereign gridlock the keys to final deliverance from the nuclear nightmare. We cannot withhold the resources essential to break its grip, to reduce its dangers. We cannot

sit in silent acquiescence to the faded homilies of the nuclear priesthood. It is time to reassert the primacy of individual conscience, the voice of reason, and the rightful interests of humanity.” (Ibid.: 769)

Crucially, the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was extended indefinitely in 1995. The treaty is considered the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and it, besides outlawing the militarization of space, even obligates nuclear powers not only to limit proliferation but “to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects,” per the legally binding advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in 1996 (*Basic Facts About the UN*, 2000: 112). In brief, without adherence to international law, there is no way of regulating and constraining the lawlessness and violence of powerful nation-states, hence no way of maintaining international peace and security, which ultimately can only lead to a final solution from which few will escape.

### **Closing remarks**

To overcome our suicidal tendencies, we need to go back to the drawing board, which must entail

- unlearning (since the more formal education one has the more indoctrinated and propagandized one usually is, as most of the writings in the world are inundated by doctrine and propaganda);
- relearning (through informal channels, by relying mainly on alternative news sources and books, articles and essays by honest dissident intellectuals, since mainstream media’s job is to make sure that vital information is kept from the public, meaning they provide diversion, not information, in order to keep us domesticated, fearful and dumbed down. This is done by constantly bombarding the public with commercial ads so that life-values become replaced solely with money-values, thereby making the void in us grow larger, since the more preoccupied we are with materialistic values, the more dehumanized, demoralized and depressed we become, despite pretenses to the contrary);<sup>[17]</sup> and
- expressing our solidarity around common frustrations (the frustration of our inability to reach our human potentialities due to cultural and institutional obstacles being the most fundamental of all), while creating the rigorous but non-autocratic cultural and institutional conditions necessary to overcome them.

Universal disarmament, but especially the elimination of all nuclear weapons, must be a top priority among other top priorities for peace and justice movements concerned with issues of species survival and well-being. It can be done if there is a genuine commitment to fundamental social transformation among a sufficiently large segment of the populations of nuclear-weapons states. And we should not let those who have a vested interest in the status quo convince us otherwise (whether they invoke arguments like “human nature is fundamentally corrupt” or “you cannot change the fact that it’s a dog-eat-dog world” or “We should fix our eyes on the next life because this world is doomed” or “The only thing that we can do is to pray to God to deliver us because we are too weak to deliver ourselves” or “We should have faith in our leaders, pray that God gives them the strength and wisdom to lead us on the path of righteousness,” or whatnot), because they are too power hungry and money hungry hence morally corrupt to act like humans. They have wallowed in their dung like beasts from time immemorial. There is no reason why we should want to mimic them if we wish to get out of Cold War thinking mode hence survive and thrive as a human race, and if we have any self-respect, because undignified servitude and traditional misery are not a law of nature. They are socially constructed realities that can be challenged and surmounted by an

aroused public, in order to enable humankind to fly as it was meant to do, though never at the expense of others, because the exigencies of the egalitarian spirit demand that we treat everyone as ends, not means.

Suffice it to say that the mindless pursuit of wealth, maximization of consumption and the struggle for unaccountable power are not conducive to survival (since the concentration of wealth and the maximization of consumption are what cause and exacerbate global poverty and since unaccountable power is raw by necessity), so the question of species survival turns very much on how quickly we dismantle existing power, in order to make way for genuinely democratic structures that put human life and well-being at center stage, irrespective of profit, and with strong albeit non-autocratic safeguards against the re-emergence of the cult of authority—the mother of all evils.

Substantive democracy might not solve all of humanity's problems, but it is likely to be the panacea for most of the ills that it faces, logically. Dare we instigate it in every possible realm so that humanity may finally leap into the future with its head raised; never again allowing itself to be reduced to dehumanizing servitude; determined to command respect on the basis of the inherent dignity of *every* person irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, health condition, talents, competencies, achievements or whatnot; resolute in the conviction that life in its rich diversity is too sacred and too dynamic to be circumscribed by lifeless, depraved conformity in the service of conceited rulers and ruthless despots and barbarians of money whose darkest souls cannot even conceive of human life except in the most exploitative terms, as if humanity were one big cavity, fit only for violent penetration, irate ejaculation, sullied conception and virtual slave labor, the fruits of which are siphoned off by voluptuous louts with more surplus value than they know what to do with?

There is nothing inevitable about the—at best—one-step-forward-two-steps-backward reality that has been imposed on most of humanity by morally and psychologically impotent (and intellectually barren) rulers who use force and fraud precisely to hide and deny such impotence.

That the fate of the planet depends on how quickly diverse, dispersed grassroots movements manage to construct bonds of solidarity and support to the point of merging and snowballing, and gaining sufficient momentum to be able to change the course of contemporary history, is not in doubt. What is in doubt is whether such movements will be able to act quickly enough, in unison, to avert the ultimate nightmares of cataclysmic climate change and global nuclear holocaust. But such a doubt should not paralyze our efforts, just because the stakes are far too high to afford hesitation, procrastination or inaction. We must mobilize ourselves for action despite lack of foreknowledge about the extent of the hoped-for rewards. If past generations fighting for justice had not done that we wouldn't have the limited rights and freedoms that we enjoy, but typically take for granted, in the West today. We have *no* moral right to deny posterity possibly greater rights and freedoms than now exist, or at the very least than roughly the same level of rights and freedoms as now exist, meaning these are never granted but won and kept by the have-nots. And for that reason, among others, the have-nots must be accorded the status of heroes, for only through their democratic efforts can we overcome the hopelessness of a futureless future, provided more people come to realize—as they must if they regard themselves as moral agents, not servants of power—that immobilization, along with every possible cowardly rationalization that goes along with it, is deeply immoral and highly destructive in consequence.

There is nothing inevitable about contemporary barbarism, but to overcome it (through thoroughgoing cultural and institutional changes), a great deal of dedication to libertarian ideals, organizational tenacity and hard, *non-alienated* work are required, inspired by the hope of a brighter future, despite many setbacks and limited successes. There's no other way of bringing about progressive change.

## Notes

[1] According to a leading figure in the post-revisionist school, John Lewis Gaddis, the origin of the Cold War should be traced to 1917, because that's when the communist powers began to express their inability and unwillingness to complement the Western industrial economies (which was supposed to be their usual service role), which was perceived in the West as the *primary* threat of communism. So the primary threat was never a military threat—since on average the missile gap was about 10 to 1 in favor of the US (according to Daniel Ellsberg, one of the high-level analysts who discovered the facts in 1960-61 by satellite imaging and that the actual ratio was 10-1 in favor of the US, demonstrating that Eisenhower was correct in his assertions, including his final State of the Union address, that the missile gap in favor of the Soviet Union was a myth), a well-known fact—but an economic one. To quote directly from the Study Group of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and the National Planning Association, the primary threat of communism was described as the economic transformation of the communist powers “in ways which reduce their willingness and ability to complement the industrial economies of the West” (Elliot, 1955: 42), “their refusal to play the game of comparative advantage and to rely primarily on foreign investment for development. If the ‘developing nations’ choose to use their resources for their own purposes, or to carry out internal social change in ways which will reduce their contribution to the industrial economies of the state capitalist world, these powers must be prepared to employ sufficient force to prevent such unreasonable behavior, which will no doubt be described as ‘internal aggression’ by agents of international communism.” (Chomsky, 1972/1973)

[2] “PPS23: Review of Current Trends in U.S. Foreign Policy,” [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Memo\\_PPS23\\_by\\_George\\_Kennan](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Memo_PPS23_by_George_Kennan). Kennan, one of the most *liberal and humane* of planners, was the head of the State Department policy planning staff in the late 1940s, later dismissed because his policy recommendations weren't extreme enough.

[3] Kissinger's claims that “Our way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, ...” do not withstand close scrutiny, as evidenced in William Blum, *Rogue State*; Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present*; Mark Zepezauer, *Take the Rich Off Welfare*; Joel Bakan, *The Corporation*; Kevin Danaher, *Corporations Are Gonna Get Your Mama*; Edward Herman *Beyond Hypocrisy and Corporate Control, Corporate Power*; Randall Shelden, *Our Punitive Society*; Noam Chomsky, *Failed States and Hopes and Prospects*; John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*; Yves Smith, *ECONned*; Loretta Napoleoni, *Rogue Economics*; Greg Palast, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*; Rajani Kanth, *Political Economy and Laissez-Faire*; Daniel Guerin, *Fascism and Big Business*, among others. Even Walter Lippmann (the dean of US journalists, a major theorist of liberal democracy and a veteran of the Creel Commission) was kind enough to dispel some illusions for us so far as some of Kissinger's claims are concerned. See his *Public Opinion*, BN Publishing, 2007, particularly pp. 90, 91-92; and his essays in Clinton Rossiter & James Lare (eds.), *The Essential Lippmann*, New York: Random House, 1963, particularly pp. 26, 106, 110. Anyway, elections are far from free and fair in the West (this is not just in reference to George W. Bush's coup d'état victory in 2000), meaning we have the best democracy money can buy, since the private sector pumps huge sums of money into the electoral system to influence not just electoral outcomes but more crucially to influence actual policies (even in one of the least corrupt countries in the world: Sweden, recently revealed by the mass media, with a low key and no commentary or debate ensuing after the revelation), domestic and international. On this point, see Thomas Ferguson, *Golden Rule: The Investment Theory of Party Competition and the Logic of Money-Driven Political Systems*.

[4] To verify this claim, see Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy*, London: Verso, 1990, ch. 1, Section 2: “The Cold War as Historical Process.” Raymond Garthoff, “Estimating Soviet Military Force Levels,” *International Security*, Vol. 14, No. 4. (Spring, 1990), pp. 93-116. And William Henderson, “United States Policy and Colonialism,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (May 1957), p. 61 at pp. 53-63.

[5] This enabled Wallace to condemn the US for “practicing a foreign policy of ‘Machiavellian principles of deceit, force and distrust’.” (Kissinger, 1994: 127) It also compelled him to “insist that ‘the same moral principles which governed in private life also should govern in international affairs’,” since in his view “Seizing the moral high ground [would mean] more than whether America's geopolitical interests were being safeguarded. (Ibid.: 127, 128)

[6] Waltz outrageously claims that “Although the possibility of war remains, nuclear weapons have drastically reduced the probability of its being fought by the states that have them. ...because of a profound change in military technology, waging war has more and more become the privilege of poor and weak states. ... One can scarcely believe that the presence of nuclear weapons does not greatly help to explain this happy condition.” (Waltz, 1990: 744) Such disgraceful apologetics can be expected from state worshippers. Waltz's crooked arguments do not come close to constituting a justification for developing and possessing nuclear weapons, since the world came very close to a global nuclear war on a few occasions during the Cold War (e.g., the Bay of Pigs incident, and others)—it's almost a miracle that nuclear war did not erupt on those occasions (for revealing information about the Cuban missile crisis, see Chomsky, *Understanding Power*, NY: Vintage Press, 2002, pp. 6-10 (“Overthrowing Third World Governments” in chap. 1) and corresponding footnotes at <http://www.understandingpower.com/AllChaps.pdf>. See

also Jorge I. Domínguez, “The @#%& Missile Crisis: (Or, What Was ‘Cuban’ About U.S. Decisions during the Cuban Missile Crisis?),” *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 2 (spring 2000): pp. 305–15, [http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~jidoming/images/jid\\_missile.PDF](http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~jidoming/images/jid_missile.PDF)

What’s more, the US has waged perpetual war since WWII to keep its economy afloat for its ruling elites (“Charles Wilson, CEO of General Electric, warned at the end of WWII that the US must not return to a civilian economy, but must keep to a ‘permanent war economy’ of the kind that was so successful during the war; a semi-command economy, run mostly by corporate executives, geared to military production,” in order to overcome the expectation by “economists and business leaders that the economy would sink back to depression without massive government intervention of the kind that, during the war years, finally overcame the Great Depression.”— Chomsky, 2004), thereby making Waltz’s claim quite deceptive, given the fact that wars have *not* “more and more become the privilege of poor and weak states.” Wars within weak states are, of course, common, but they are very much a legacy of European colonialism. But wars between weak states are uncommon, at least on the African continent (Davidson, 1992: 166). Suffice it to say that the world is an immensely dangerous place as a result of nuclear weapons.

[7] Every single war (hot, cold and tepid) waged by the US since WWII has been illegal and immoral. This is why Blum says, “Washington policy-makers have been “unable, or unwilling, to distinguish nationalism from pro-communism, neutralism from wickedness... From 1945 to 2003, the United States attempted to overthrow more than 40 foreign governments, and to crush more than 30 populist-nationalist movements fighting against intolerable regimes. In the process, the US bombed some 25 countries, caused the end of life for several million people, and condemned many more to a life of agony and despair.” (Blum, 2004: 100)

[8] For the crimes, terror and repression of capitalism (which we have a moral responsibility to mitigate in the short term and prevent in the long term by dismantling the death machine that is causing endless suffering), see the works cited in note 3 as well as Blum, *Killing Hope*; Gabriel Kolko, *Century of War*; Chalmers Johnson, *Sorrows of Empire*; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States: 990-1990*; Jim Kim, et al. (eds.), *Dying for Growth*; Mark Curtis, *Web of Deceit*; Michael Mandel, *How America Gets Away with Murder*; John Pilger, *The New Rulers of the World* and *Freedom Next Time*; Arundhati Roy, *The Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire*; Mark Zepezauer, *The CIA’s Greatest Hits*; Kevin Danaher, *10 Reasons to Abolish the IMF and World Bank*; David Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World*; John Cooley, *Unholy Wars*; Edward Herman, *Real Terror Network*; Alexander George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism*; Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft*; Gore Vidal, *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*; Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*; Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*; Linda Hunt, *Secret Agenda*; Charles Higham, *Trading with the Enemy*; Christopher Simpson, *Blowback*; Chomsky, *Year 501*; Lawrence Shoup & William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust*; Alexander Cockburn & Jeffrey St. Clair, *Whiteout*; Alfred McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin and Policing America’s Empire*; Graham Hancock, *Lords of Poverty*; Neil Houghton (ed.), *Struggle Against History*; Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*; Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry and Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*; James Peck, *Washington’s China*; Frederick Clairmonte, *Economic Liberalism and Underdevelopment*; Richard Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*; among many others.

[9] However, globalization predates the period 1950-2000, and the latter period is not remarkable compared with the period 1850 to 1914, since “merchandise trade, capital investment and labour migration were all comparable to or greater than those of today.” (Hirst & Thompson, 2002: 248)

[10] If the South tries to export finished products on fair-trade terms, it’s invariably slapped with high tariffs. The implication is that the gap between the rich and poor countries isn’t at all likely to diminish under the current processes of corporate globalization. If anything, it will be widened, since globalization is a sanitized term for ‘imperialism’—a widely held perception (Nye, 2002: 545) Sadly, Hirst and Thompson don’t recognize this fact, since they fail, despite their otherwise fairly good analysis, to see that global poverty is a by-product of Western hegemony, a failure best epitomized by their faulty assumption that “the current extreme inequality of global income distribution will continue. That for the majority of the world’s poor this will be the result of a failure of domestic economic development rather than direct exploitation by the rich will not make their lot easier to bear.” (p. 251) In any case, Hirst’s and Thompson’s proposed solutions aren’t well-conceived, since, contrary to their astonishing claim on p. 256, military action and social solidarity *cannot* go hand in hand. This idea is based on the Pentagon’s Orwellian military philosophy called “The New Military Humanism,” which doesn’t even rise to the level of a bad joke, particularly given America’s ongoing militarization of outer space for admittedly offensive purposes (the authors mention this fact in passing on p. 254, albeit very far from satisfactorily). For details, see Andrew J. Bacevich, “Different Drummers, Same Drum,” *National Interest*, no. 64 (summer 2001): pp. 67–77, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2751/is\\_2001\\_Summer/ai\\_76560816/pg\\_9/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2751/is_2001_Summer/ai_76560816/pg_9/); Lawrence F. Kaplan, “Offensive Line,” *New Republic* 224, no. 11 (12 March 2001), <http://www.tnr.com/print/article/politics/offensive-line>; David Ruppe, “Nuclear Weapons: RAND Report Says Accidental Launch Threat Growing,” *Global Security Newswire*, 22 May 2003, [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues/newswires/2003\\_5\\_22.html](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/newswires/2003_5_22.html); Rand Corporation, “Beyond the Nuclear Shadow,” May 2003, <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1666/>; and US Space Command, *Vision for 2020*, [http://www.middlepowers.org/gsi/docs/vision\\_2020.pdf](http://www.middlepowers.org/gsi/docs/vision_2020.pdf). See also “Japan-U.S. Missile Defense Collaboration:

Rhetorically Delicious, Deceptively Dangerous,” *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Vol. 25:1, Winter 2001, <http://www.pitt.edu/~gordonm/JPubs/JapanTMD.pdf> and Air Force Space Command, *Strategic Master Plan FY04 and Beyond*, 5 November 2002, Executive Summary, [www.thememoryhole.org/mil/space-commandplan-fy2004.pdf](http://www.thememoryhole.org/mil/space-commandplan-fy2004.pdf)

No less crucially, to presuppose that the rational process of resource allocation can be made by (tyrannical) corporate decisions and (uninformed) consumer choice is a very serious flaw, given the totalitarian nature of corporate power (to verify the claim about corporate tyranny, see Joel Bakan, *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*) and the manipulated nature of consumer wants. But they are probably correct in their assumption and projection that we will likely witness integration in some respects and disintegration in others (*ibid.*: 255), that effective governance will increase in some respects and retreat in others, and finally that different mechanisms of localization and internationalization will be applied depending on circumstances (*ibid.*). Whether globalization will survive the onslaughts of future cataclysmic climate change and the ensuing migratory disasters, including the threats posed by non-state terror, which are likely to become more violent unless the West starts to address its underlying causes (by reversing its own “offensive dominance” [*ibid.*: 254]), no one can say. When it comes to the above claim that wants are created by corporate interests, it bears mention that advertisement (a huge industry) is a form of manipulation and deceit, to which ordinary citizens in the West particularly are bombarded with incessantly. Thus Western consumer choice is socially and environmentally irresponsible. See Pope John Paul II, “Respect for Human Rights: The Secret of True Peace,” <http://houseofatreu.tripod.com/pope.html>. Arthur Jones, “Pope blasts consumerism as human rights threat,” *National Catholic Reporter*, Jan. 8, 1999, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1141/is\\_10\\_35/ai\\_53588258/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1141/is_10_35/ai_53588258/). Alessandra Stanley, “Pope Is Returning to Mexico With New Target: Capitalism,” *New York Times*, Jan. 22, 1999, <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FA0F1EFA35540C718EDDA80894D1494D81&scp=2&sq=Pope+Is+Returning+to+Mexico+With+New+Target&st=cse&pagewanted=print>.

[11] See Chomsky, “Debt, Drugs and Democracy,” *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Vol. 33, No.1, Jul/Aug 1999, <http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/19990312.htm>. “The People Always Pay,” *Guardian Unlimited*, Jan. 21, 1999, [www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/jan/21/debtrelief.development3](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/jan/21/debtrelief.development3). The recent so-called debt cancellations given to the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) by the G8 should not be taken at face value, since they were cosmetic gestures “hiding a strengthening of the creditor countries’ dominant position.” (“CADTM Outraged at the G8’s Meanness over the Debt,” [www.fuckyouusa.com/Writings/CADTM\\_Outraged\\_at\\_the\\_G8.pdf](http://www.fuckyouusa.com/Writings/CADTM_Outraged_at_the_G8.pdf)). See also John Pilger, “G8 Will Not Ease Third World Poverty,” [www.greenleft.org.au/2005/632/34388](http://www.greenleft.org.au/2005/632/34388), and “The G8 Summit: A Circus and a Fraud,” *Znet*, June 24, 2005, [www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2005-06/24pilger.cfm](http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2005-06/24pilger.cfm)

[12] See Ralph Peters, “Constant Conflict,” *US Army War College Quarterly*, <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article3011.htm> For the record, multilateralism would not be a huge improvement over unilateralism unless it is a genuine reflection of ordinary citizens’ socially and morally desirable wishes. So far this type of multilateralism has been a desideratum.

[13] Mearsheimer implicitly recognizes this fact: “institutions...hold little promise for promoting stability in the post-Cold War world,” since “There is no ‘government over government’ (1994-5: 7, 10). Hence “Power begets superior counterpower; it’s the oldest rule of world politics.” (Brooks & Wohlforth in Williams et al., 2006: 703)

[14] And the reason this European invented system (which was established through centuries of extreme violence and bloodshed, and imposed on the Third World by extreme force) has failed and is wreaking havoc is that it is not necessarily the natural form of human or social organization. If it were, then the history of the pre- and post-nation-state system would not be a history of fraud and force, of extreme violence and suffering, but be vindicated by the laws of nature, as opposed to man-made laws, the latter, of course, always being designed to protect the interests of the regime in power and not those of the society, except incidentally. In any case, those who stress ethnicity or religion as the prime factor for intra- (or even inter-) state conflicts typically overlook the fact that it’s usually the former that is used as a pretext for disguising economic and power motives. In brief, people of different ethnicities or religious affiliations do not feel a natural hostility towards each other—it is power hungry groups that stimulate and manipulate ethnic, religious and chauvinistic sentiments in people for cynical reasons.

[15] To verify this claim, see Charles Knight, “U.S. Military-Strategic Ambitions: Expanding to Fill the post-Soviet Vacuum, 2000,” *Project on Defense Alternatives*, 2000, <http://www.comw.org/pda/0006vacuum.html>

[16] For useful insights into the hows and whys of the permanent war economy, see Chomsky, *The Savage Extreme of a Narrow Policy Spectrum*, <http://counterpunch.org/merlin07312004.html>. For evidence that war is a golden time for state capitalism, see US Marine Corps Major-General Smedley Darlington Butler, “War is a Racket,” [www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/waris racket.pdf](http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/waris racket.pdf) and Ed Rippy, “War is Still a Racket,” [http://erippy.home.mindspring.com/War\\_Is\\_Still\\_a\\_Racket.html](http://erippy.home.mindspring.com/War_Is_Still_a_Racket.html)

[17] If the re-learning process does not prompt us to *strongly* reject market values and start embracing and actively promoting non-market ones, then we can be sure that we have been misinformed and misled. See my “The Cult of Having versus the City of Being” at <http://www.scribd.com/people/documents/3219608-mhethiop3296> for a discussion about market versus non-market values.

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