# Imperialism Unveiled

Modes of War and Colonization on the 21st Century Geopolitical Chessboard

> Jorge Arreaza Montserrat Nerliny Carucí (editors)









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# Prologue

# The Violence of the West

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\*\*International Relations Expert, with a specialization in Social Policy (CENDES) and a Master in European Studies from the University of Cambridge (United Kingdom). Currently holds a political position as Executive Secretary of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America–Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP). Email: contacto@jaarreaza.org.ve. gnorance comes at a price. "An ignorant people," said the Liberator Simón Bolívar, "is a blind instrument of its own destruction." This statement-warning is a painful truth, especially when referring to that ignorance produced by a type of rationality, with a form of knowledge that does not liberate but rather colonizes and intentionally diverts attention from the fact that capitalism and its imperial model are the roots of most of our problems.

It is important to remember that the current crisis of the Western civilizational model—imposed in the moderncolonial world system over the past 500 years—is a crisis of a form of knowledge, a form of understanding. Therefore, to *unveil imperialism* is *to reveal* that which keeps us oppressed and prevents us from achieving authentic and complete independence. In other words, it means exposing not only the ways in which the modalities of war of the collective West are being lived/thought today, but also the cultural horizon that has engendered modern imperialism.

Removing the mask from imperialism is a historical and political process that allows the recovery of the *messianic* 



*power* of the peoples who, as living communities, take charge of their history, looking back on a past that, according to Benjamin's theses, has prepared the maturation of current struggles and demands its redemption in the present.

Illuminating *what happens to us*, more than a mere contemplative event, is nothing other than that realization and repair; and as "every generation [...] has to discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it" (Fanon, 1965<sup>1</sup>, p. 102), we, who are at the heart of the current struggle, have the responsibility to foster a fundamental transformation in the structure and relations of the human conglomerates of the Global South, starting with a real break with imperialism; a rupture that necessarily implies the impossibility of continuing to reproduce a mode of existence that has exhausted its prospects and the conditions for life reproduction on Earth, such as the modern/capitalist way of life, today expressed in wars and schemes of re-colonization, different from those inherited from past experiences.

Modern imperialism leaves, here and there, *germs* of *rot*—as emphasized by the Franco-Caribbean writer and philosopher Frantz Fanon (op. cit.)—which we must relentlessly *uncover* and *eradicate* from our lands and our minds.

A first aspect to highlight in this critical reflection is the emphasis on the development of the imperial scheme with the export of capital, whose metabolism influences the development of capitalism worldwide.

From Lenin's perspective (2012<sup>2</sup>), in his text Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism (a popular outline), any "general" analysis of imperialism that overlooks or downplays the essential difference between socioeconomic formations inevitably becomes hollow

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> [Original text published in 1917]



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> [Original text published in 1961]

trivialities or bluster, as in comparing "ancient Rome with Great Britain":

Colonial policy and imperialism existed before the contemporary phase of capitalism and even before capitalism itself. Rome, based on slavery, maintained a colonial policy and practiced imperialism. However, the capitalist colonial policy of the earlier stages of capitalism is essentially different from the colonial policy of financial capital. The main feature of the contemporary phase of capitalism is the dominance of monopolistic associations of large entrepreneurs. [...] The more developed capitalism becomes, the more the scarcity of raw materials is felt, the more intense the competition and the search for sources of raw materials around the world, the fiercer the struggle for he possession of colonies becomes. (pp.50-51)

Unveiling imperialism requires deciphering the economic, political, and cultural order of the last five centuries, which acts against the liberation of human beings; furthermore, it demands discerning the mythical, ideological, and tactical artifices of the hegemonic system in times of civilizational crisis, that is, imperialism in its colonial form and in its more subtle and dangerous neocolonial form. Among the critical reflections found in the essays present in this book, this awareness prevails. This work—which brings together Ana Esther Ceceña (Mexico), Francisco Herrera and Daniel Lew (Venezuela), Abel Prieto (Cuba), Judith Valencia (Venezuela), and Ramón Grosfoguel (Puerto Rico)-highlights the importance of re-understanding the planetary imperial politics to construct communitary meanings and pathways, under the historical principle of unity, understanding that liberation must be collective, or it will not happen.



Mexican economist and sharp expert in the geopolitics of resources, Ana Esther Ceceña, opens this collection of texts with an extraordinary reading of the current geopolitical knots and the new crusades undertaken by the collective West. This prominent thinker emphasizes that the geopolitical redesign, the search for "resources" (especially those deemed "strategic"), and the *disciplining* of populations that do not fully submit to the hegemonic model have not only changed the aesthetics of war, the meanings of intervention, the tools and technologies, the styles and modes, but also the challenges and their very conception:

... [an] element that drives contemporary wars consists of the need to constantly reaffirm a world order that is inevitably disjointed, as well as its characteristic modes of behavior and hierarchies of submission. Disregarding history and turning the circumstances into a perpetual present, the collective West continuously engages in new crusades. **Colonization must be constantly reiterated, both in relation to territories and mentalities.** (emphasis added)

Imperialism, basically, presents itself as a provider of *what is convenient for us*. Following Ceceña, imperialism shamelessly uses all its threads, styles, and weapons to *discipline* peoples that resist following the pattern of capital. This even implies pushing colonized peoples to fill their subjectivity with meanings, aspirations, and desires constructed by the colonizer. As it is a systematic denial of the *other*, depriving the *other* of all human attributes, the colonizer alters history and even the modes of structuring the thought of colonized peoples. To understand this "disciplining," it is enough to simply locate the design



and the persistent and reiterated use of communication technology aimed at *social orthopedics*.

The war against non-human nature is also part of the modes of imperial relations and disciplining. Ana Esther Ceceña refers to how rebellious, wild nature is also disciplined by the ideology of submission.

The mode of imperial relation carries with it the political theology of Descartes: *to be lords and possessors of nature* (both non-human nature and/or human nature that the West considers *wild or inferior*). Thus, imperialism succeeds when all that unruly nature is finally subdued. The second of the essays contained in this work describes this process: ecological imperialism, as one of the curses of the modern/ colonial/capitalist world-system, has managed to infiltrate the imaginaries, ways of life, and dreams of other cultures, to the point that emerging powers seem to see no alternatives but remain trapped within the practical-geopolitical and energetic frameworks that capitalism itself has established as the only viable, possible, and desirable patterns.

The work of Venezuelan researchers Francisco F. Herrera and Daniel Lew brings to the table two critically unresolved issues in the study of imperialism: the type of society that modernity builds and its unsustainable relations with so-called "cheap nature," as well as the myths that justify and legitimize capitalism, primarily the myth of "development/progress."

Ecologists Herrera and Lew point out that the narrative of imperialism is the story of frontier expansion, transforming the concepts of nature, production, society, and technology. Following Patel and Moore (2017), these scholars state that *frontiers* are an inherent condition of capitalism's existence: frontiers are meeting points between capital and all forms of nature, including humans.



Through frontiers, empires use violence, culture, and **knowledge** to mobilize low-cost nature. They also recall Lenin's approach regarding the continuous re-distribution by imperial forces: "Lenin was not mistaken; since those days, contemporary history has been marked by conflicts associated with the acquisition of cheap nature and labor, essential for capitalist reproduction."

In light of today's epoch crises, these authors urge us to shed the ontological burden of the West and the set of dual categories characteristic of modern thought; and at the same time, they invite us to recognize vital spaces of resistance and other understandings of life, territory, and human relationships that may allow us to develop the Robinsonian principle of *knowing how to live* in community.

The truth is that the modern world-system and its knowledge have put humanity, the planet, and life into crisis. Capitalism, in particular, feeds on this crisis, like a cancer, destroying the entire environment in which it reproduces. Modern science and technology (the forms of knowledge we learn and reproduce in schools, universities, and academic research centers) introduced the possibility/ obligation to dominate non-human nature (this is how a society with blind faith in "progress" relates to "nature"), with the negative consequences we suffer today. In other words, the modern pattern of knowledge is co-responsible for the crises we are witnessing in the 21st century.

We have always denounced the imperial relation in economic and political spheres. We continue to share this warning. But, at the same time, we must examine the science-education-culture-society relation: by continuing to reproduce the foundations of modern science and paying homage (i.e., favoring) to modern knowledge, are we not perpetuating the imperial spirit of dependence and the



ignorance produced by knowledge that oppresses us and systematically threatens life?

The commitment to unveil imperialism requires examining to what extent it has distorted our vision of our own realities: we see the "abnormal" as "normal," and vice versa. In words of Fanon (1965<sup>3</sup>), how can we not understand that we have something better to do than to follow that Europe?

That Europe, which has never stopped talking about the human being, which has never ceased to proclaim that it only cares about humankind—now we know the suffering humanity has endured for each of its spirit's victories.

Comrades, the European game is definitively over: we must find something else. We can do anything now, as long as we do not imitate Europe, as long as we do not become obsessed with the desire to catch up with Europe.

[...] Let us choose not to imitate Europe and direct our muscles and our minds in a new direction. Let us try to create the whole human being that Europe has been incapable of bringing to fruition.

Two centuries ago, a former European colony decided to imitate Europe. It succeeded to such an extent that the United States of America has become a monster, where Europe's flaws, illnesses, and inhumanity have reached terrifying proportions. (p. 159)

The modern/capitalist model, in order to be overcome in every field, must be understood—as proposed by the decolonial economist and philosopher Franz Hinkelammert—as a religion that has been able to displace all other religions, even mobilizing them at the service of the constant restoration, reinforcement, and strengthening of capitalism under new guises.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> [Original text published in 1961]

Chávez (2024, p. 104), at the Closing Ceremony of the Caribbean Heads of State and Government Summit, held in 2005 in Jamaica, rightfully urged us to reflect from the roots: "We are facing a crisis of the 'development' model; the development model that imperialism imposed on us is unsustainable [...], enforced by invasions and abuses—it is not sustainable! [...] The capitalist, imperialist model [...] is destroying the planet."

The emphasis placed on questioning scientifictechnological paradigms in critiques of capitalism and its imperial model has fluctuated: it remains part of the unfinished business of our cultural decolonization. The crystal-clear insights of Cuban writer Abel Prieto—one of the contributors—on the ideas and imaginaries associated with 'progress,' science, and technology as paradigms of modernity and civilization are crucial to dismantling modern imperialism. This writer reminds us that "cultural domination" is "an underestimated facet of global power" on the grand world stage: "One of Martí's core obsessions was combating the fascination of Latin American politicians and intellectuals with the U.S. model of 'prosperity' and 'democracy.' 'We have nothing to learn from the United States,' he asserted in an 1894 article."

For Abel Prieto, the most dangerous weapon that imperialism wields—and actively employs—against the sovereignty and liberation struggles of nations is culture. Cultural colonization fosters forgetfulness, a fixation on the present, the exacerbation of consumerism, triviality, fascination with what comes from the North, and disdain among the peoples of the Global South for their roots, traditions, and origins:

"... (the) *globocolonization* [...] has advanced at a dizzying pace, thanks mainly to the development of information



technologies [...]. It must be said that we have never experienced a cultural and ethical crisis as devastating as this one, which blends what is valuable—what we must preserve, cherish, and remember—with a flood of irrelevant and 'entertaining' messages. Never before has culture been so degraded into mere merchandise, a hollow pastime. Never before has the colonial presence been so overwhelming in our lives and subjectivities. Never before has the cultural hegemony of a small group of corporations—amassing billions in profits while advancing the system's interests—reached such extremes.

Indeed, the intensity of the aftermath of the civilizational crisis and capitalism's digital panopticon is reshaping imaginaries, penetrating even the most intimate spheres of individuals with the aim of deepening alienation brought about by cognitive-affective the colonization. This process operates within eroded minds and modern, reconfigured subjectivities. The digital capitalism economy has turned us into digital dependants, leaving us overwhelmed by a frenzy of competition, misinformation, and anxiety. As Fidel Castro once said: "It's one thing to have information manipulated; it's another to have your way of thinking manipulated." Worse still: to reach a point where we no longer even reason, much less reflect on why we stopped thinking long ago. Abel Prieto echoes this idea: "Lies affect knowledge," but "conditioned reflexes affect the ability to think." The cultural and psychosocial warfare waged by capital affects-and has affected-our very psychic apparatus. We are becoming part of a common sense that "thinks us." In other words, imperialism and its deleterious effects on life are both real and palpable, in both their substance and form.



We must envision and build a world outside the frameworks of a civilization that, instead of solving humanity's problems, perpetuates them. Any blow against imperialism must also strike at capitalism and, beyond that, at modernity itself. This is the direction toward which the tradition of resistance and persistence among the peoples of the Global South must advance, but also towards a deeper understanding of what it means for the modern/capitalist project to be immersed in a profound crisis. We must recognize that imperialism does not improvise wars; rather, it meticulously plans and rehearses them. Venezuelan scholar Judith Valencia and Puerto Rican researcher Ramón Grosfoguel address these issues in the present compilation. Both authors piece together the puzzle of the war against Venezuela and the rise of imperialist neofascism.

Economist Judith Valencia, through an incisive historiographical perspective, reveals key episodes of political and territorial tensions in the region over recent decades. One such moment highlights the severe blow dealt to the United States' expansionist, extractivist, and privatizing policies with the defeat of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) proposal in Mar del Plata in 2005. After 30 years of military and economic dominance in the region, and a decade of preparations for a new phase of corporate control, this defeat marked a temporary realignment of political and geostrategic forces in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Another insight of the Venezuelan researcher also serves as a warning. Following the defeat of the FTAA, the region embarked on a series of paths aimed at consolidating efforts in integration, alliances, and cooperation through the establishment of various institutions, initiatives, and programs. Achievements such as ALBA, CELAC, Petrocaribe, and UNASUR—promoted as part of an antiimperialist counteroffensive—have faced interventionist and destabilizing attacks. These threaten the formation of regional blocs capable of engaging with other global blocs on one hand, and resisting the aggressions of corporate imperialism on the other, which uses the United States as its main platform within the global concert of nation-States.

The contemporary scenario described by Judith Valencia is part of the imperialist escalation precisely identified by Puerto Rican decolonial sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel:

"Any analysis of today's global geopolitics must consider the fracture within Western imperialisms. Western elites are now divided between two fascist, genocidal, and authoritarian projects: the 'globalist' elites of financial capital, who convene annually in Davos, and the elites of imperialist nationalists. Both are fascist, racist, colonialist, and imperialist, but in different ways. [...] The nationalists aim to save the current world capitalist system from its terminal crisis; the globalists, fully aware of the impending civilizational collapse of global capitalism, seek to let the system fall and are rapidly preparing for the creation of a new historical system beyond capitalism-one that some have called 'techno-feudalism.' This new system will be more authoritarian, more unjust, more exploitative, more genocidal, and more destructive of life than anything we have seen in the last 530 years of 'modern/ colonial Western capitalist civilization.' [...] In the case of the blockade and the 'sanctions' (read: unilateral coercive measures) against Venezuela, both factions also converge in their goal of destroying the Bolivarian Revolution and plundering its natural resources."



The capitalist system and its imperial model today reveal the roughest face of inhumanity. In order to keep the system functioning, its political option is clear: eliminate those who oppose it or those who are at the *bottom*. It is an utterly arrogant and intimidating stance, in which the empire feels it no longer needs to justify its actions. This is a defining feature of this face of neo-fascism: there is no longer any pretense!

In the past, it was: Convert to Christianity, or I'll kill you! Become civilized, or I'll kill you! Develop, or I'll kill you! Democratize, or I'll kill you! Now, it's simply "I'll kill you," without alternatives.

The Puerto Rican sociologist emphasizes the importance of Venezuela (and the entire continent) deepening the originality of its path, as defined by Hugo Chávez, toward 21st-century communal socialism, under the motto "Commune or nothing." He warns, "It would be a serious mistake to imitate [...] the developmentalist path of capitalist restoration" or to pursue civilizational transitions lacking their own distinct identity, merely echoing the foundational narratives of the West.

Indeed, we must decide on a change of course: to shake off the spiral of violence from *ignorant Europe* and break away from it, with the knowledge, history, and heritage of ancestral communalism... with the original thought of our territories. In the words of Marx, "Let us assume that human is human, and that their relationships are human relationships: then, only love can be exchanged for love. Each of your relationships with human and with nature must be a specific expression, corresponding to the purpose of your will, of your authentic existence..." We have deep confidence that this collection of essays—crafted by thinkers from our America and condensed in this book, *Imperialism Unveiled. Modes of War and Colonization on the 21st Century Geopolitical Chessboard*—can contribute to fostering debates, reflections, and actions that support the struggle and consciousness of those who urgently aim to the construction of other, truly human forms of relationship. Today, what is at stake is not only peace, but the very foundations of life itself, and with it, the future of humanity and life on the planet. The unity of all communities (human and non-human, with Mother Earth included) is our anti-imperialist banner!

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# The Geopolitical Knots and the Genocide in Gaza

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If I must die, you must live to tell my story. If I must die, let it bring hope, let it be a tale. —Refaat Alareer

Geopolitical tensions in the early decades of the 21st century point toward a possible hegemonic redesign, where the ghosts of the past begin to circle around American power and the "American way of life." Despite the cultural flattening and homogenization driven by capitalism as a means to discipline and shape the global logic and management, we find ourselves at a moment of emergences—from both ancestral forces and critical deviations arising within the system itself. Cracks and divergences, as well as the redefinition of internal hierarchies and competitive conditions, compel the development of multiple forms of warfare to ensure the maintenance of power.

By identifying major threats that jeopardize its hegemony, American power focuses on five States that, either bidirectionally or in combination, represent the greatest risk and are commonly referred to in military coding as 4+1. These are China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and a trans-territorial entity with power comparable to those four states: violent extremist organizations (VEOs), which may include groups such as ISIS, globally-reaching



cartels, or counter-hegemonic initiatives from ideologically dissident countries. The center of gravity and main focus has shifted from diffuse enemies toward powerful entities that directly challenge the supremacy of the United States and its project of a hegemonic world.

However, beyond the concentrated power struggles, an even greater risk is posed by more corrosive than confrontational entities that question not just the hegemony but the system as a whole. From diverse origins, levels, and characteristics, yet with cultural roots, traditions, ways of life, worldviews, and systemically disruptive intentions, these are variously labeled as the *Arab world, indigenous or native groups, backward peoples, tribes*, or, in the worst cases, as *races* threatening system stability or *terrorists*.

This combination generates polyvalent and confusing wars. Depending on the point of view, these could be labelled as wars over territories or resources; ethnic wars; or any of the variants composing contemporary conflict. They may equally be mercenary, technological, conventional, proxy, nonkinetic, unrestricted, or full-spectrum wars, encompassing non-military tools and aspects as well, such as financial, narrative, or health-related dimensions, among others (Ceceña, 2023). There is no doubt that warfare is embedded in the modes of engagement, rupture, and disciplining in the contemporary world, and, as such, must be studied and repudiated with the utmost precision and depth.

### Palestine and New Thresholds

Old-new wars, like the one in Palestine, continue to add damages and reasons. Although it is a single, prolonged conflict that could be described as an "infinite war," it is continually updated, modifying or deepening its styles


and methods, making it worthwhile to explore some of its components on the 21st century.

The three elements fueling contemporary wars are the geopolitical redesign resulting from competition and hegemonic disputes; the quest for resources, particularly those deemed "strategic"; and the disciplining of populations, territories, or even states under the dictates, rules, and interests of hegemony as they emerge in each historical moment.

The most notorious and defining recent wars that have set the course for the 21st century are nearly all situated in the Middle East or linked in various ways to the region's dynamics: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Palestine, with impacts also seen in Libya, Somalia, and Ukraine, not to mention the destabilization processes promoted around them. This is the region of the Red Sea, the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean, the Gulf of Oman, the ancient route that connected spices, silk, opium, and global trade for more than two millennia and still retains substantial importance.

#### The Geopolitical Redesign

Two centuries before the Christian era, the Silk Road had extensive circuits across Asia, with some connections in Africa and Eastern Europe. The power that came with controlling the route mapped by the Chinese fueled the growth of empires and ignited greed and wars. In the 13th century, Genghis Khan managed to control a vast stretch of Asian territory, from the Caspian Sea to the Pacific coast, occupying much of China and holding dominion over these routes. This power, known as the Mongol Empire, contended with Western powers, among others. The Popes also waged their own wars to conquer trade circuits—known as the Crusades—in pursuit of control over commerce with



Asia. These Crusades, which lasted nearly three centuries, pitted Western forces against the Mongol power established by Genghis Khan and his heirs, the Chinese dynasties that displaced them, and, later, Osman and the Ottomans.

Then, as now, the Middle East was the crossroads of civilizations. Notably, it was in Palestine that the West finally defeated the Ottomans in the early 20th century. However, this did not mean the dissolution of the Arab world. It was a political defeat, not a cultural one, to the extent that it led Samuel Huntington (1996), a member of the White House National Security Council, to describe the situation at the dawn of the third millennium as a "clash of civilizations."

Indeed, with all the complexity that a category like "Arab world" entails and with all the internal conflicts that persist—particularly due to different types of alliances with external powers—at times of extreme definition, such as Israel's war of extermination against Palestine, the Arab League presents a unified front, revealing the relatively fleeting nature, considering the long term, of a political conquest when contrasted with the enduring nature of culture<sup>1</sup>.

As we look at Map 1, it becomes evident that, beyond any circumstantial alignment or subordination of Arab countries to Western powers, the Arab world has a deeply rooted territorial presence that could pose a threat to the hierarchy and dynamics of the existing order. Beyond political circumstances and contingencies, it draws on customs and bonds nurtured over very long periods.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See the Arab League's position on the war between Israel and Palestine at the International Court of Justice: https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=fRn4qYAORAE

Map 1 *The Arab League* 



In reality, the main passage between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal, inaugurated on November 17, 1869, remains in Arab territory. Despite the weight of Western power, the Arabs do continue to control this crucial connection point, and, ultimately, they can be unpredictable and, under certain circumstances, unconquerable.

The only truly safe position that the West holds in this entire region is the one currently occupied by Israel, which, territorially speaking, is minimal compared to the entirety of the Arab world, yet serves very effectively as a spearhead.



The Middle East region has been subjected to a state of almost constant war, with all parties involved (see map 2). Largely, what is at stake is the control of strategic routes and passages, although the wealth of the region itself and the geopolitical weight of the forces within it are also clearly significant. To the north lies Russian territory, and to the east, Persian (now Iranian) territory.

#### Map 2 Middle East: Wars, Conflict, and Strategic Routes



The siege of Russia and Iran is one of the central objectives of all the movements in the region by Israel, NATO, and particularly, the United States. Until 1999, NATO consisted of 16 members from Western Europe;

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however, since that time, 16 more countries have joined, doubling its size (see table 1), without including its list of allies, which, curiously, expanded to include Colombia in 2009. Much of Eastern Europe was integrated into NATO, geographically growing in a way that deprived Russia of its routes of connection to the West.

Recalling the famous National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski—although at that time the reflections were much more focused on Russia than on China—the route blockages, accesses, and positioning in this region are strategic and must aim at suffocating those considered enemies:

"Turkey and Iran are not only important geostrategic players but also geopolitical pivots, and their own internal situations are crucial for the future of the region." (Brzezinski, 1998, p. 139)

If the main gas and oil pipelines in the region continue to pass through Russian territory to the distribution center—also Russian—on the Black Sea, from Novorossiysk, the political consequences of this will be felt, even without any open power play by Russia (...), if other gas and oil pipelines cross the Caspian Sea to Azerbaijan and then head toward the Mediterranean through Turkey, and if any reach the Arabian Sea through Afghanistan, there will not be a single power that monopolizes access to the resources. (Brzezinski, 1998, p. 145)



# Table 1Recent Additions to the North Atlantic TreatyOrganization

Countries	Date
Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland	March 12, 1999
Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	March 29, 2004
Croatia, Albania	April 1, 2009
Montenegro	June 5, 2017
North Macedonia	March 27, 2020
Finland	April 4, 2023
Sweden	March 7, 2024

Source: Created with information from NATO. https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index\_es.html

The acceleration of new NATO additions from countries that had persistently championed their calling for peace, such as Finland and Sweden, is a sign of a new type of Orientalism, under the style studied by Edward Said (2008), in which the differences between non-Western countries are dissolved, due to the perceived danger that their forces might pose to collective Western interests and the American way of life, firmly entrenched and reproduced in Europe. The opportunity presented by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the following years, and the lack of sense of the threat of communism, changed the conditions of the geopolitical chessboard. Today, the fear of communism has shifted toward cultural differences,



included in the dominant narrative as precursors to potential acts of terrorism, thus masking the real projects of extermination or colonization, and deploying racisms on multiple scales that erode communal networks and undermine the trust and solidarity that have taken so long to manifest in a blatant genocide like that of Gaza. The oft-mentioned Iron Dome, which, by the way, always had two sides, has transformed into NATO's military curtain and a sanctions curtain, primarily against Russia, China, and Iran.

#### Map 3 Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (excluding the United States and Canada)



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Since the last decades of the 20th century, the possibility of shifting the Arab countries' control over the Indian Ocean and Red Sea passages to the Mediterranean Sea, in addition to the land passages, has been explored. Since around 85% of global trade and many military movements occur by sea, the straits connecting these two maritime regions are absolutely strategic. The Suez Canal is one of the most frequently used passages, with more than 12% of total ocean traffic.

The authority of the Canal, Osama Rabea, provided the most recent influx data: "25,887 ships have passed through the Canal so far in the current fiscal year [2022-2023]," according to the authority's website, "and around 23,800 passed through the Canal last year" (Reuters, 2023). This means that "for the first time in the Canal's history, the Suez Canal Authority of Egypt has achieved a record revenue of 9.4 billion dollars in the current fiscal year, which ends on June 30, compared to 7 billion dollars last year" (Osama Rabea, interviewed by Reuters, 2023).

The geopolitical and economic relevance of the Suez Canal became evident in 2021, when the 400-meter-long "Ever Given" vessel got stuck blocking the passage for a week. The approximate calculation is that 420 ships carrying 224,000 tons were left waiting, resulting in a loss of between 9 and 10 billion dollars per day (France 24, 2021).

Such eventualities not only jeopardize major trade and global supply chains, but also weaken the ability to respond quickly – militarily speaking – to real or potential conflicts.

Simultaneously, circumstances such as changes of policies of some governments at different times - like Egypt, in this case – contributed to the need to think of alternative routes. The same has occurred in America with the Panama Canal. On one hand, Panamanian sovereignty claims led to

the withdrawal of U.S. forces responsible for supervision, and on the other hand, due to the increasing frequency, volume, and size of maritime transits, Panama has proved to be insufficient, which has encouraged the consideration of projects like the interoceanic corridor of the Tehuantepec Isthmus, mainly, and others like those of Central America or the IIRSA (South American Regional Infrastructure Initiative), now called Cosiplan.

In order to bypass Arab dominance over the control of the interoceanic route, and to anticipate any new accident or boycott, the idea of using Israel's small territory, with its permanent extensions over Palestine, to design a new passage between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean has been considered<sup>2</sup>. Initially, the project aimed to create a connection between the port of Eilat in southern Israel and the port of Ashkelon on the Mediterranean coast, without passing through Gaza. However, the current genocidal intervention to clear the entire Gaza territory seems to indicate a change in plans, or route. Considering the type of terrain, the feasibility of tracing the new canal, named Ben Gurion, very close to the border between Israel and the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, would involve its passage through Gaza (see Map 4).



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> A well-informed presentation by Richard Medhurst (2024) on the Ben Gurion canal can be accessed on the Global Research website in video format.





The global hegemonic dispute undoubtedly revolves around the possibility that the United States, or the collective West, will be able to redesign the patterns and routes of global movements, in response to the activation of the One Belt, One Road initiative, promoted by China. Time works against them. China moves slowly but decisively, establishing trade relations, investments, and even military agreements with many countries, including in Africa and Latin America; but its ties with Russia and Iran have also strengthened across all fields. Considering that at least one-third of the world's energy supply passes through the Gulf of Oman, and its

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destination is partly the Asia-Pacific region through the Indian Ocean, and partly to the Western countries via the Red Sea, it is essential to secure the area and find safe routes. However, the United States and NATO no longer have the flexibility of the 20th century. Between March 11 and 15, 2024, China, Russia, and Iran held joint military exercises in the Gulf of Oman, with the 'purpose of jointly maintaining regional maritime security' [according to the Chinese Ministry of Defense]" (DW, 2024), with the participation of Azerbaijan, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Oman, South Africa, and Kazakhstan as observers (Euronews, 2024).

The rapprochement of these three countries with Egypt is a red light that, quite likely, is within the considerations of the Israeli and U.S. offensive against Palestine and the rush to clear the area. The mass murder of women and children, and the speed with which the remaining population of Gaza is being pushed out of the Strip, shows a strategic purpose of great magnitude: Is it the Ben Gurion canal?

#### Resources

The Middle East, as a whole, contains the largest oil reserves in the world. The certified reserves of the Middle East are around one billion barrels of oil. Only Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates hold 812.5 billion barrels, to which 80 billion barrels from Russia can be added in geopolitical terms (see Morales, 2024). It is known that the country with the largest individual reserves is Venezuela, with 304 billion barrels, but since oil fields are not bound by political borders, the Middle East, the Caspian Sea, and



surrounding areas account for approximately 60% of the world's oil<sup>3</sup>.

Israel does not have oil, but it is a connecting territory that could improve its conditions from Europe's perspective with the construction of the new canal. Its oil supply comes primarily from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kurdistan, Russia, Iraq, Brazil, Nigeria, and Gabon (Oilchange, 2024a and 2024b). Surprisingly, its supplies have not been interrupted since October 7.

The countries currently or recently at war in this region are all linked in different ways to the global oil market, either through their reserves or through their geographical location, which makes them active or potential routes. This is not the case for Palestine, but Israel does have an oil route that ends at the port of Eilat, from where the construction of the alternative canal is planned (see map 5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The figures on oil percentages vary as new deposits are discovered or exhausted. Exploration activity has increased as oil production approaches peak oil, the point at which production becomes more expensive than the benefits of its use (see Ferrari, 2020).



#### Map 5

#### EAPC'S EUROPE-ASIA CRUDE ROUTE



Source: S&P Global Platts, EAPC

Note: "(...) pipelines connecting the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, as part of new trade agreements between the two countries [UAE and Israel]." S&P Global Commodity Insights (2020). Retrieved from: https://www.spglobal. com/commodityinsights/en/market-insights/latest-news/oil/102020-israelipipeline-company-to-transport-uae-oil-via-red-sea-med-network

In the search for safe routes for the transport of oil to the West, the Ben Gurion Canal project has, as a precedent, an agreement made between Israel, the Europe-Asia Pipeline Company (EAPC), and the United Arab Emirates with MED-RED Land Bridge Ltd. (MRLB) to store



and transport oil and its products through bidirectional pipelines, avoiding the Suez Canal. The Ashkelon port has the capacity to move 30 million metric tons of crude per year and receive containers of 250,000 dwt<sup>4</sup>, with a storage capacity of 2.3 million cubic meters. The Port of Eilat, on the other hand, has the capacity to store 1.4 million cubic meters in tanks up to 350,000 dwt.

EAPC provides an alternative to the Suez Canal, which is limited by the size of oil tankers, and to the Sumed pipeline in Egypt, which only transports oil in one direction: from the Red Sea terminal in Ain Sukhna to Sidi Kerir on the Mediterranean (S&P Global Commodity Insights, 2020).

However, the Ben Gurion project does not seem to be abandoned. Evidence suggests that steps are being taken, some quite accelerated in certain aspects, such as the *population cleansing* of the territory through genocide and indiscriminate expulsions. Another sign could be the sudden decision by the United States to build a *temporary* port in Gaza to bring food aid. This task has been urgently assigned to the U.S. military, and nothing dismisses the hypothesis that this construction might be part of the new route project from the port of Eilat.

In 1947, the territorial area of Palestine was 26,300 km<sup>2</sup> (Gómez Robledo, 2003). In November of that year, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181/11 decided the partition of Palestine into two States: Palestine would retain 11,800 km<sup>2</sup>, losing 55% of its territory, and the newly established State of Israel, which would host the Jewish people, was granted 14,500 km<sup>2</sup> (Gómez Robledo, 2003), ironically a larger area than that of its original inhabitants. Although this was an

 $<sup>^4\,</sup>$  Measures the total weight a ship can safely carry, including cargo, fuel, water, passengers, and crew.





unprecedented resolution and a violation against the Palestinian people, and considering the disproportion of the territorial distribution, Israel was dissatisfied, and after a long process of colonization, by 2023, it already occupied an area of 21,671 km<sup>2</sup>, leaving Palestinian territory reduced to 365 km<sup>2</sup> for Gaza and 5,800 km<sup>2</sup> for the West Bank.

Nevertheless, the tiny Gaza Strip has an exit to the Mediterranean Sea and an extension of territorial waters that has allowed Palestinians to fish and supply food from the sea.

But there's more. Between 1999 and 2000, the British Gas Group (BG), under an agreement with the Palestinian Authority (PA), made a significant discovery in the territorial waters belonging to Gaza:

"... [a] large gas field named Gaza Marine, which was located 17 to 21 nautical miles from the Gaza coast, thus forming part of the territorial waters belonging to Palestine [according to the Gaza-Jericho Agreement of 1994 and the Oslo II Accords]" (Rodríguez, 2023, p. 92).

The identified reserves were crucial for Palestine, since "... the reserves contained approximately 1 trillion cubic feet" of gas (Rodríguez, 2023). This added another reason to continue the occupation of Palestinian territory through the expulsion or suffocation of its population.

In this logic, the blockade on access to extraterritorial resources, which began with the Second Intifada and coincided with the discoveries of natural gas, made it impossible for civilian or commercial navigation to or from the Gaza Strip. Israel, with the aim of preventing Palestine from exploiting its new reserves, reduced Gaza's territorial waters "... from the 20 nautical miles established by Oslo to 6 nautical miles after Hamas' electoral victory in 2006,



and finally to 3 nautical miles after the Cast Lead Operation in 2008-2009" (Rodríguez, 2023, p.95).

In addition to the gas reserves in Gaza's territorial waters, Israel also needs access to the water reserves in the West Bank, a matter closely related to the settler occupations promoted in that region. Covertly or brutally genocidal, Palestinian territory is increasingly passing into Israeli hands, with the approval of the United States and no effective response from the international community.

#### Disciplining

The third element driving contemporary wars is the need to constantly reaffirm a global order that is inevitably disjointed, as well as the ways of behavior and submission hierarchies inherent to it. Disregarding history and turning the context into a perpetual present, the collective West constantly engages in new crusades. Colonization must be perpetually reiterated, both in terms of territories and mentalities.

There is always, in this dynamic, the recognition of another, often generic and indecipherable, but one type of recognition that does not need to be deciphered, just disciplined. A chaotic, disorderly *other*, which must be disciplined to be efficient and manageable.

The mind of the Oriental ones [...], like their picturesque streets, is utterly lacking in symmetry, and their way of reasoning is full of disordered descriptions. (Cromer<sup>5</sup>, as cited in Said, 2008, p. 66)

The field of narratives becomes one of the privileged tools in this process and is part of the war strategies. It is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Cromer was first a governor and administrator in India, and later, for twenty-five years, in Egypt, during which time he became the supreme British consul general.



enough to recall that one of the first tasks assigned by the U.S. government to Halliburton during the 2003 invasion of Iraq was the preparation of textbooks in Arabic, but with the content of their own version of history. Also, the modalities of war have to be adapted to the cultural, architectural, religious, and even dietary keys of each people and region.

Particularly, in the case of Palestine, where family bonds shape communities that are hard to break, and the ways of conceiving and constructing habitable spaces are, as Cromer once stated, *disorderly* according to Western patterns, either the codes are deciphered and rearranged, or operations of ethnic cleansing or genocide are carried out.

Each people have their own worldviews, their ways of organizing life and territorializing. The great colonizing enterprise of modernity had to face obstacles in understanding the world, life styles, and geography. And while the ways adopted in each case might have been different, whether due to ignorance, brutality, or strategy, they proceeded to disregard everything that was different from the parameters within which their supremacy was guaranteed. The way of approaching Africa, and even its various regions, was very different from how America or Asia were approached. And although the populations, once subjected, ended up crossing paths in the same *civilizing* process, they still maintain many of their differences 500 years later, even though they also generated *mestizaje* and, in some cases, the deletion of memory.

Colonizations have, by flattening and imposition, set *universal* criteria to which the diverse peoples have not finally yielded.

The disciplining of Palestine had to undergo a process of reorganization.

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In a fine work, James Scott (1998) studies how the virgin forests of northern Europe had to be partially cleared and replanted to make them manageable. They could only be useful and profitable when the valuable species they sheltered were lined up and the weeds eliminated. The forests remained in their place but were no longer the same. They were *disciplined forests*.

The legibility of a society provides the capacity for large-scale social engineering, the ideology of high modernism provides the desire, the authoritarian state provides the determination to act on that desire, and an incapacitated civil society provides the flattened social terrain upon which to build. (Scott, 1998, p. 5) Similarly, Eyal Weizman<sup>6</sup>, in several of his works, has studied how it was essential to break the architectural design of Palestinian cities in order to establish control and prevent attacks.

...war is no longer about the destruction of space, but rather is about its reorganization. The 'inverse geometry' that was conceived to turn the city 'inside out', shuffling its private and public spaces. (Weizman, 2012, p. 109)

In addition to the reorganization of space, which allows for physical control over the *other* (or the enemy), the confusion or mind capture is central to ensuring the adoption of disciplines, ways of thinking and behaving, in accordance with the perspective of the conquerors. Filling the mind of the *other* with meanings constructed by the colonizer, reshaping the ways of structuring thought, introducing foreign ambitions and desires, changing the narrative of history to turn it into a renewed *orientalism* — already deeply studied by Edward Said (2008). In

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See particularly Weizman, 2010 and 2012.

other words: making people believe that they are what the colonizer thinks they are and not what experience, wisdom, and lived reality tells.

Another way to alter narratives occurs through the persistent and repeated use of communication technology, through doctored, manipulated, biased, distorted images or their omission, to prevent the real facts from being known. This constructs a mass-diffused story that can convince the world that nothing serious is happening, or that the explanation is confusing, or that the peoples resisting are terrorists. Any version can be built.

#### Conclusion

Most contemporary wars are urban. According to figures from the World Bank (2024), 56% of the world's population now lives in cities, and the trend towards urbanization is constant. Consequently, warfare technology privileges the ability to intervene in urban spaces and networks, where cyber espionage, cyber sabotage, and the creation of confusing, false, distorted, exaggerated, concealing, and manipulative virtual realities stand out, though bombs and missiles continue to be launched, and the goal of invading and appropriating territories remains.

The wars of the 21st century began with the *de facto* establishment of unilateral criteria that bypassed all international norms created throughout the 20th century. Unspecified threats to national security were raised as sufficient justification for bloody wars, particularly those that spread across the Middle East. Without seeking the approval of the UN Security Council, the United States invaded Afghanistan, Iraq, intervened in Syria, Lebanon, and proxy wars in Yemen, and, through NATO, in Ukraine, to name the most notable cases. As undefined as the threats



to national security (most of the time beyond national borders) was the identification of terrorism as a triggering and justifying element. Terrorism became everything that obstructs the plans of expansion and appropriation of the collective West, led by the United States. In some cases, arising from incidents provoked by the intervention forces themselves, in others, treating popular resistances as a terrorist threat, and in others, exploiting existing regional disputes. In any case, once these unilateral wars, called *preventive*, were set in motion, international norms were left in ruins. The threshold of permissibility was altered to the point where the United States admitted the use of torture as a legal resource in cases of national security risk — thus: in the abstract.

With the genocidal war in Palestine, the threshold is being crossed again. Hamas's response to the illegal processes of colonization of Palestinian territory served as the trigger for a new Nakba, much deeper and more extensive than the previous one. Scholars of the October 7 incident, seen as the cause of the devastation that occurred in the following months and is still ongoing, have provided elements that blame Israel itself for feeding or fueling the attack. It is difficult to provide evidence. In any case, nothing justifies the genocide and territorial cleansing carried out since that moment, which is an extreme continuation of the policy Israel has followed toward Palestine.

It is important to insist on the invalidation of international law that this process implies: the attack on hospitals, schools, women and children, civilians, international doctors, journalists... All of this, condemned by the international norms related to the protection of human rights in general and the specific rights of children



or other groups, are flagrantly violated, with no one able to stop it.

Even the historic resolution of the International Court of Justice, after hearing broad and heartbreaking testimonies and arguments, did not ask Israel to stop the war. And although its resolution is binding, nothing changed after it was issued.

International law is in ruins. Its threshold of permissibility is undefined in practice. The perpetration of genocides, with total impunity, seems to be the hallmark of contemporary wars.

Let us bet on the reorganization of life in the long run and the construction of a common sense of peace and understanding in diversity. In the meantime, we must find a way to defeat war.



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### Capitalism and Ecological Imperialism: A Debate of our Time

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#### **Territorial Imperialism and Current Geopolitics**

Pollowing the dissolution of the Soviet bloc in 1991, the role of the USSR as a counterbalance to capitalist imperialism faded. The neoliberal phase of capitalism, which had begun a decade earlier, gained extraordinary momentum and coined the term globalization as a motivational concept, primarily expressed in the opening of markets and the expansion of digital communication technologies. Concurrently, there was a strengthening of State policies (and intervention) by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The World Trade Organization took on a decisive role in managing global trade, and there was a military expansion of the United States (and other NATO members), particularly toward key territories for access to energy sources, oil, and gas, as part of the world-system deployment. It is important to recall that the need for resources (from nature), financing, markets, distribution, and wage labor form key links in the imperialist proposal of the world-economy (Wallerstein, 1988).



This long neoliberal decade sparked numerous reactions; perhaps the most notable was the emergence of an economic bloc to contain the U.S. offensive, made up of Russia, China, India, South Africa, and Brazil: the BRICS. Nevertheless, the logics of economic growth, industrialization, collective "development/progress," and the certainty of access to the resources that sustain the production and reproduction of this model, maintain a complex and tense territorial control by States over their own resources and those beyond their borders.

Thephenomenon of market totalization implies, as Franz Hinkelammert (2001) explains, not only the "imperialism of economists" but also brings with it an imperialism of the globalized economy regarding all dimensions of human life. That is, the social system becomes entirely subordinated to the forces of the market, its interests, and its actors. In this context, distinguishing between economy and market is an elusive task, but it becomes more compromising when it becomes synonymous with categories such as *democracy* or freedom. Herbert Marcuse, in his text Freedom and Aggression in the Technological Society (1970), states that industrial society, which emerged with the consolidation of capitalism, is conceived as a total apparatus and has in modern rationality, combined with high technological and productive development, a total coordination and manipulation, which is achieved by methods invisible to the population, and which, in appearance, seems pleasant to them.

The formation of a capitalist ideology, understood as a general political strategy, takes shape after the French Revolution—suggests Wallerstein (1988)—and resolves a blockage in the world-economy system that, for three centuries, had been characterized by a transoceanic market,



an international division of labor, corresponding to a center-periphery relationship, commodity chains, and the emergence of monopolies. For Wallerstein, capitalism is the flip side of the world-economy, so one cannot exist without the other, and capitalism existentially depends on the worldeconomy. Equally important: the existence of capitalist ideology provides legitimacy and social acceptance.

The Western world-economy, after experiencing successive expansions of its borders, is now reaching a thermodynamic maxim: it is not possible to grow infinitely in a finite system. This irrefutable reality confronts us with at least two scenarios of planetary-scale implications. The first one is that the redistribution of existing resources between the two dominant geopolitical blocs, previously mentioned, occurs through warfare, resulting in an outcome that involves the use of nuclear weapons, with drastic consequences for humanity and the entire web of life. The second one is that the progressive but accelerated depletion of conditions for the reproduction of life, as a consequence of the plundering and exploitation of nature, sanctioned by capitalist ideology, increasingly limits access to fresh water and food for the population, in addition to fostering extreme weather conditions that modify the biomes of the planet, beyond the human experience of the last hundred thousand years. In both scenarios, what is at stake are the living conditions on the planet; therefore, an exhaustive debate on the formation, reproduction, and implications of imperialism and capitalism remains an epochal imperative.

#### **Economic Imperialism**

Capitalism—as we understand it today—successfully integrates the ethical, material, cognitive, and cultural components that have made up its structure for just



over three centuries. Certainly, imperialist exploitation, understood as colonial domination and the projection of state power beyond the borders of the nation-state, dates back several centuries (in line with Jason Moore, the 16th century could be recognized as an epochal milestone) and led to the appropriation and accumulation of merchant capital (material)—the original capital without which capitalism would not have been possible. But it also contributed to the development of a complex societal framework that embodies a new subjectivity (the West), which laid the foundations for a new relationship and attitude toward life, equally crucial for the consolidation of capitalism (Patel and Moore, 2017; Veltmeyer, 2019).

Thus, establishing the roots of capitalism—and its intertwined relationship with imperialism—can help conceptualize foundational aspects necessary for the current debate. Wallerstein, in *Historical Capitalism* (1988), suggests that a characteristic (and unprecedented) feature of capitalism is that capital came to be used fundamentally for its own expansion; that is, to accumulate more capital. This author argues that, unlike previous social systems, with the presence of accumulated capital, the chain that allows the reproduction of capital (*i.e.*, the ownership or control of nature, production through labor, distribution mechanisms, buyers willing to pay for profit, and the possibility of saving profits for reinvestment scenarios) was frequently hindered for various reasons:

On one hand, many of the links in the chain were considered, in previous historical systems, **irrational and/or immoral by those holding political and moral authority**. Yet, even without the direct interference of those who had the power to intervene, the process was usually frustrated by the lack of



one or more elements of the process: accumulated reserves on a monetary basis, labor forces intended to be used by the producer, distributor networks, and consumers who were buyers. (Wallerstein, 1988, p. 3; emphasis added)

The phenomenon that began to take shape with the incorporation of the Atlantic into the boundaries of European exploitation of nature—an expansion that, within a century, would encompass the Indian and Pacific Oceans—was the concept of the *market*, understood as the expansion of exploitation borders, the inclusion of novel and desirable goods, and the generation of extraordinary profits. Thus began an accelerated process of commodification of every link in the chain necessary for capital reproduction. Continuing with Wallerstein (1988):

Historical capitalism involved therefore the widespread commodification of processes—not merely exchange processes but production processes, distribution processes, and investment processes—that had previously been conducted other than via a "market." And, in the course of seeking to accumulate more and more capital, capitalists sought to commodify more and more of these social processes in all spheres of economic life. Since capitalism is a self-regarding process, it follows that no social transaction has been intrinsically exempt from possible inclusion. This is why we may say that the historical development of capitalism has involved the thrust towards the commodification of everything. (p. 4)

The scale of the appropriation of uninhabited territories, such as the island of Madeira, or inhabited by non-European peoples, such as the coasts of Africa or the Americas, triggered a series of challenges and conflicts for



the new colonizers. As Marx suggested, the appropriation of natural wealth (minerals or agricultural products) transformed in the peripheries of emerging metropolises, through slave or poorly remunerated labor, was a key element for the accumulation of wealth that can be stored (such as gold and silver) and transformed into commodities (such as sugar cane and cotton). Gradually, capitalism demanded a local labor force to process vast quantities of raw materials, through the emergence of a proletariat. Thus, a new class would emerge, dispossessed of its property rights over the means of production, which only has its labor power and the dependence on its wages. Commodified nature and labor would form the material foundations for the consolidation of capitalism.

#### Economic Imperialism Was Initially Ecological

Modes of production determine lifestyles, and this includes the productive forces (labor, nature, knowledge, and technologies) and the relations of production, which, in turn, regulate relationships among people in the process of producing commodities. Therefore, the interaction or metabolism between human beings and nature is inherent to the human condition; imperialism also constitutes a socio-ecological metabolism, where products and producers are shaped by nature, which is understood as the web of life (Harvey, 2014; Moore, 2023).

Let us then explore how ecology co-produced the European imagination that would lead to economic imperialism, which Wallerstein termed the world-economy.

It is clear that throughout history, some human settlements created spaces where environmental transformations, as a result of the metabolic relationship determined by production, generated more or less drastic environmental changes, but these occurred over centuries and in limited areas. Beginning in 1450, the alterations that would take place in territories and their consequences would reach transoceanic scales, and environmental and social transformations would occur within decades. One piece of evidence for this phenomenon is the recorded decline in carbon dioxide emissions, resulting from the reduction in agricultural activity in the Americas due to the genocide perpetrated by the Europeans (Koch *et al.*, 2019). Patel and Moore (2017) argue that, between 1450 and 1750, the foundations were laid for a new era in human relationships with the rest of nature, with Europe as its epicenter: capitalism as a mode of production and determinant of notions of being and existence was beginning.

In Mediterranean Europe, during the 15th century, the pressure for agricultural land; for timber, to construct ships; and resources for the payment of war debts reached a peak. The need to expand production boundaries emerged in the imagination of the great powers of the time: "It was in an experiment in an early Portuguese colonial outpost that many of the features of the modern world were first convened, in the manufacture of one of the first capitalist products: sugar" (Patel and Moore, 2017, p. 14)

The island of Madeira not only became a fundamental enclave for obtaining timber (hence its name in Portuguese), but its fertile soils, due to their volcanic origin, also facilitated the exploitation of a product that was known but elusive for European courts: crystalline sugar extracted from sugar cane, a primarily tropical crop. The Portuguese arrival to these uninhabited islands implied a new relationship with a depopulated nature: there was no "other" to claim, resist, or defend their connection to the land and the life contained within it. For its administration,



the Portuguese crown implemented a feudal model of land distribution known as *donatarias*, which was very attractive to the capital investment of mainland nobles. While the Crown maintained ownership, the territories could be inherited by the descendants of the owners. These, in turn, could dispose of land within the perimeter of their donatarias for the expansion of their activities. This model of appropriation and land administration was, decades later, emulated by the Portuguese in their new colonies, regardless of the existence of local populations. From Sicily, the first sugarcane stalks arrived, which, with good soil and abundant water, became the prized commodity produced by *cheap nature* (Patel and Moore, 2017), and a powerful confirmation of the usefulness of the expansion of production frontiers, facilitated by ship transportation.

*Frontiers* (of production) became the geographical and demographic logic of the power of the metropolises. The example of sweet Madeira was not a minor issue. By the end of the 15th century, the Crowns of Spain and Portugal were heavily indebted to Genoese financiers, after the Christian Reconquest war against the centuriesold presence of Muslim peoples in the southern Iberian Peninsula. The pressure from the debts and the early success of the colonization/exploitation of Madeira stimulated the promising idea of obtaining wealth through the conquest of the Atlantic; new wars and new frontiers opened to the Iberian imagination. With this, a new continental power emerged.

Unlike the local expansion of peoples seeking land or resources, as a sociopolitical expansion encompassing new territories, Moore proposes the *frontier* as a conceptual category, an inherent condition for capitalism to exist. A frontier, Patel and Moore (2017) say, is a site where:



... crises encourage new strategies for profit. Frontiers are frontiers because they are the encounter zones between capital and all kinds of nature-humans included. They are always, then, about reducing the costs of doing business. Capitalism not only has frontiers; it exists only through frontiers, expanding from one place to the next, transforming socioecological relations, producing more and more kinds of goods and services that circulate through an expanding series of exchanges. But more important, frontiers are sites where power is exercised-and not just economic power. Through frontiers, states and empires use violence, culture, and knowledge to mobilize natures at low cost. It's this cheapening that makes frontiers so central to modern history and that makes possible capitalism's expansive markets. (p. 18–19)

The narrative of imperialism is the story of the expansion of frontiers, transforming conceptions of nature, production, society and technology, in the three centuries after sugar commodification. Moore (2016) also coined the term "cheap nature" as an interpretative framework for the novel conception of nature's organization that emerged from capitalism. Moore clarifies that cheap does not mean *free*: "*Cheap* is here understood as work/energy and biophysical utility produced with minimal labor-power and directly implicated in commodity production and exchange". Territories, territoriality, nature, and resources (agricultural and mineral), obtained through the expansion of new frontiers-exercised through power, domination, control, and transformation—would be subjected to a novel reconceptualization of non-human nature (Pineda, 2021), progressively desacralized, racialized, and objectified; that is, a commodified nature. The world-economy was, in



essence, a manifestation of the seminal and original *world-ecology* (Moore, 2016).

## Fluctuations in Nature and the Emergence of Capitalism

From the narrative, historiography, and scientifictechnological metanarrative that culturally constitutes us, it is difficult to consider that climate could have fundamentally defined human existence on the planet-especially its modes of production and migrations. On one hand, this is because the history we have constructed has enormous biases toward the events of the last ten thousand years, with a malicious geographic turn focused on the history of Europe over the last 530 years; and on the other hand, it is due to the disregard for understanding the history of other modes of production, different from capitalism, that still coexist with us-those that modernity has labeled "primitive." Climatically, the historiography of the last ten thousand years loosely coincides with the Holocene period; a brief geological time characterized by a warm climate (an interglacial period) and high predictability of seasonal climate patterns (Rockström et al., 2009). Numerous authors consider this is not mere coincidence. Human existence on Earth occurred during the Pleistocene, over about 150 thousand years, a period characterized by greater climate variability and long cold periods. Therefore, it is considered that hunting and harvest, associated with temporary migrations, allowed better adaptation to the prevailing climate, in contrast to agriculture.

Despite the climatic stability throughout the Holocene, small climatic fluctuations (mainly in rainfall patterns and annual average temperatures) have been recorded in the last two millennia. Moore, in his conceptualization of


capitalism as a world-ecology, highlights the relationship between these anomalies and sociopolitical phenomena in the feudal and pre-capitalist history of Western Europe.

The second half of the Middle Ages was characterized by a warm and stable period that lasted about 300 years, between 950 and 1250, with mild winters and longer planting seasons. These conditions favored the expansion of agricultural land, the invention of better-adapted agricultural technologies, improvements in food quality (which reflected in health), and the possibility of storing grains. This allowed part of the population not to engage in agriculture, and, as a whole, the European population grew. Feudal lords accumulated power in the form of money or grain. This favorable period possibly fueled the desire for expansion, coinciding with the Crusades directed toward the prosperous Eastern Mediterranean and the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula by the kingdoms of Castile and Aragón.

By 1315, it is known of an extremely wet period that would last for a couple of years and would have a devastating effect on agricultural production. Famines spread over several years and the European population decreased by 20%. The Black Plague appeared in 1347, and along with it and hunger, popular revolts became commonplace. It is not surprising that this period led Hobbes, decades later, to state that *homo homini lupus* (man is a wolf to man). European feudalism had entered crisis: its logic of power, production, and nature collapsed.

Villages still remembered better times: good harvests, short winters, huge mountain areas suitable for growing crops; in short, health and wealth: they had enjoyed the fruits, and now came the hardships; but that is not forgotten. Debts, endless wars, peasant and noble



discontent, and the awareness of rich territories beyond Europe contributed to the search for new frontiers, and so it happened. Additionally, the Little Ice Age began, a regional phenomenon in the North Atlantic that would last from the 14th century until the mid-19th century.

This cold period also had sociopolitical consequences that led to geopolitical ones. The unpredictable nature, which struck against agriculture and the well-being of the people, required control and domination. Territories with milder climates were easily accessible to ships and were highly productive; a gradual commodification of processes was underway, thus, control by financiers. With the breakdown of feudalism and the weakening of the papacy, States guided by the religious force of Protestantism emerged. The Little Ice Age would occur in a new Europe—one that was transoceanic and under a completely different conception from that prevalent during feudalism; the world-ecology had a new modern worldview.

#### Imperialism As Control and Plunder of Nature

The depletion of agroecological conditions in the last centuries of European feudalism had geopolitical consequences. The emergence of America in the Iberian imagination was no minor event. On one hand, unlike Madeira, it was not uninhabited, but its population and territories did not correspond to the East Indies, with which they had traded (mainly by land) for centuries. On the other hand, America was not included in the foundational metanarrative of Christianity, specifically in the repopulation from Noah's Ark: the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth did not prosper on this continent. They would only have dispersed in the three parts of the world known to Christianity (Michael, 2022). The debate between Ginés de

Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de las Casas in 1550 (preceded by the 1537 *Sublimis Deus* papal bull) marked a fundamental milestone in the process of racializing European relations, regarding the most recent discoveries (nature and labor capacity); it is significant that the "Indians" were also referred to as *naturals*. Although the 1537 papal bull and the Valladolid debate recognized the humanity of the indigenous people of the Americas and their potential to adopt Christianity, the simple dispute (or questioning) reflects the cultural stance on their existence. The Portuguese's successful experience on uninhabited islands was an invitation to consider "America as uninhabited by humans," mainly for an ethical-mercantile interest. Finally, there was one reality in the papacy or Iberian courts, and another on the disputed territories in America.

In 1492, like a stroke of magic, the Iberian frontiers expanded to such an extent that it could only shock culturally. The Portuguese experience on Madeira, as a laboratory for cheap nature, intertwined with mercantile links, gained a new dimension. The early experience of sugar cane plantations would now find abundant land in the Caribbean islands and along the Brazilian coast, and with cheap nature, the cheap labor force. With sugar plantations, a new mode of production emerged, projected from the experience of the Portuguese *donatarias*; violence and desacralization would lay the foundations for racism as a cultural conception. For Europeans, America was absent from their worldview, ancestry, and identity. In the long 16th century, an ontology emerged that hierarchically separated culture from barbarism, monotheism from polytheism, and property over nature, as divine inheritance, became plunder.



In order to produce one kilogram of sugar, at least 40 kg of firewood had to be burned. Thus, Madeira, in less than a century, could no longer honor its name; but in America, the story would be different: vast forests were cleared to make way for plantations and provided abundant firewood for sugar refinement; welcome cheap energy! The plunder of gold and silver was enormous; initially, it came from cultural possessions and later directly from the mines. For European courts and the emerging bourgeoisie to the north, capital would no longer be constituted by stored grain; it would be precious metals *hard cash*.

The abundant cheap nature required abundant cheap labor. Once again, the Portuguese made a breakthrough. No longer Madeira, but *São Tomé* was the successful experience to emulate. By 1530, *São Tomé* led the entire Atlantic in sugar production; the secret, in addition to fertile soils, was the slave labor, coming from Gabon and Guinea. So, the idea of bringing African slaves as labor force to the Caribbean, the Brazilian coast, and the southern United States had already been proven successful. The emerging racialization would give the indigenous people or "naturals" the potential to adopt Christianity, but for Africans, the category would be *bestialization*. Races would characterize the social map of Europe; with them, and the emergence of America, a new dualism would be established: society-nature.

# **Global frontiers**

The decades of control and administration by the Spanish Crown over the Netherlands favored the transfer of capital and wealth to this region of the North Atlantic (1566-1648). The ports of Antwerp and Amsterdam became prominent in the transit of goods from the continent,



including the proliferation of sugar refineries, based on cane sugar sourced from the Dutch Atlantic colonies.

By the early 17th century, the capital, wood from the Nordic countries (used as an energy source and for shipbuilding), and a series of corporations based on a solid financial system enabled the Dutch to colonize various coastal areas in the Americas and Asia, and commercialize the production chains through the Dutch East India Company and the Dutch West India Company. By this time, unlike Spain and Portugal, the Netherlands had separated from the papacy, and Protestantism had become the mercantile ethics behind its colonial-imperial expansion.

The different Protestant currents that spread across England, France, Germany, and the Netherlands privileged work above other human activities. It was an era when the choice for eternal life-the entrance to the City of God described by St. Augustine-was marked by an ephemeral and precious earthly life, where the "waste" of time was considered a mortal sin. By this time, in the metropolises, labor—besides being alienated from the provisioning nature and restricted to wages-became an act of faith. In just a few generations, a notion emerged that still accompanies us today in industrial society: the abstract and complex acceptance that work is measured by time, and even more impressive, that work and life are two separate components of human existence. This initial process of factory domestication, destined to exploit human labor, relied on an essential control device for capitalism: the clock. With this, a new subjectivity concerning time was forged.

However, this disciplinary process would not have been so swift—only taking three generations (Thompson, 1967)—without the internalization and transformation of collective subjectivity in favor of this transition from



rural life to factory life. In short, Weber (2005) argues that "Calvinism was historically one of the agents of education in the spirit of capitalism"; indeed, the nascent Dutch, French, and German bourgeoisie would be sheltered by the Protestant work ethic emanating from the Reformation.

In addition to their colonies in the Americas, the Dutch Empire colonized the Indonesian archipelago and controlled the flow of goods from the Far East to Europe; for a century, its naval, commercial, and financial power was unquestionable. While the Netherlands became a multioceanic empire at the expense of the former Portuguese colonies, England gradually capitalized on its overseas colonies. However, the first major English experiment occurred at home and quickly expanded to other frontiers: the enclosures. The enclosures were a local experiment in appropriating common goods (non-human nature) into the hands of landowners, while simultaneously excluding the peasantry. This phenomenon is the seed of the proletariat, the subject dispossessed of arable lands, water, forests; in other words: alienated from the web of life (Polanyi, 1962). Private property was born, albeit haltingly and in various forms. In Ireland, specifically in the province of Ulster, the English imposed, violently, settlers from Scotland and northern England, Protestant by religion, on lands confiscated from the Gaelic people; the strategy used was the enclosures financed by private capital; the result was the forced displacement of the local population. Years later, Hobbes, privileging private property, published Leviathan, laying the foundations of possessive materialism, characteristic of the bourgeois liberal capitalism that constitutes the modern state (MacPherson, 2005).

The transatlantic English expansion was a very different experience from the Iberian one. England

expanded its frontiers without Catholic scruples or the power of the papacy, and with an origin mark: the control and domination of inferior and "dangerous" nature, which Francis Bacon would define as separate from man, separate from culture. However, the violence and racism that characterized the young English imperialism, and which had their seed in 1492, were simply reconfigured and rationalized in the English manner. From philosophy, from the highest societal values in the British world, nature was understood as rivers, animals, plants, indigenous peoples, women, blacks; all those things that could become cheap goods and, for this reason, had a value much lower than that of the subject (European, rational, Protestant, and cultured), who, from their moral superiority, could dispose (and did dispose) of their destinies.

Taking advantage of the Franco-Dutch wars, England would ride over the territories (mostly insular or coastal) of the Dutch Empire, but in a more aggressive manner: it would go inland. All of Eastern Africa, from Egypt to South Africa, India, Australia, Canada, as well as the eastern coast of the United States and Caribbean colonies, formed part of a new and vast frontier of cheap nature (and its added cheap labor); while, in the metropolis, the exploitation of cheap labor emerged as the nascent proletariat. Huge amounts of cotton from the United States could no longer be processed by hand; factory life required a redesign of cities; going *inland* meant that ships were no longer enough, trains would appear; the depletion of the forests in the British Isles pressured the use of the legendary coal mines: with coal, cheap energy reached a geological dimension.

With factories, technologies; with private property, public pollution; with the plunder of cheap labor and nature, poverty; with the supremacy of the owner-subject,



the discrimination of women; the European metropolis was so filled with symbolic violence and contradictions that the task of Karl Marx, Victor Hugo, or Charles Dickens was to capture them.

#### Christianity, Racism, Modernity, and Knowledge: Legitimization of Ecological Imperialism

The transition from Catholic and feudal Europe to Protestant and commercial Europe was marked by a supposed disconnection from the recent past, akin to a rebirth. As a denial of *being*, the old identity was re-semanticized into a new *being*. This process is called secularization, or the transition from Christianity to Christendom. However, it cannot be denied that some elements underwent profound changes, or the changes they brought about were profound.

This period coincided with the global expansion of the Dutch and English empires. These empires began to consider themselves as the highest manifestation of human achievement; they literally believed they had "liberated" themselves from gods and magic. The influence of René Descartes' separation between mind and body, privileging reason, has since had a lasting effect on Western culture. Rationality gained an authority that still prevails in our societies, four centuries later. Under the authority of reason (which, of course, was attributed to a select few), the subjugation of the body and anything lacking reason (women, non-human nature, and many humans reduced to nature) was legitimized. A society founded on reason and scientific knowledge as a social and economic policy emerged, based on the now-justified control of nature. Europe also secularized the universal conception of Christianity. Thus, Protestant, liberal, mercantile reason was not only European reason; it became the universal



condition of reason, and therefore the world, in its entirety, needed to be explained and domesticated by it.

The English imperialism, which now dominated the seas, was guided by the forces of science, progress, and rationality (i.e., modernity). From there, it established and regulated institutions, social relations, and prejudices, with the essence being the progressive commercialization of all aspects of life (capitalist production) and ontological dualisms borrowed from Catholic Europe (culture/ barbarism; monotheism/polytheism; whites/Indians and blacks), now scientifically legitimized by adding reason/ body and man/nature. Modernity is simultaneously an essentially racist phenomenon, legitimized by a knowledge pattern (science) that rationalizes racism, making it an ideology and culture, while secularizing Christendom (Colmenares and Grosfoguel, 2024). With Moore, we could argue that barbarism, the body, the Indian and the black, the polytheists, nature-these are the *cheap* elements of the equation.

It is not surprising that, from this idea of superiority (guided by commercialization), a fundamental task was the exploration of all forms of nature, as well as its identification and classification based on usefulness, justified by reason and progress. The taxonomy of plants became the main task of botanists in the 18th century, such as Linnaeus and Buffon. Decades later, scientists were dedicated to recording and reporting the globe's fauna and flora, their distribution, commercial uses, and the possibility of reproducing them in the metropolis. Notable figures include Humboldt and Darwin in South America, Spix and Saint-Hilaire in Brazil, and Wallace in Asia (Herrera *et al.*, 2018).

It was no longer in the name of a monarch, emperor, or Christian god; now, in the name of science, imperial



dominion over nature was legitimized, and consequently, it became a useful tool for regulating and commercializing social life at the frontiers of capital.

But how Christian is science? Lynn White (1967) argues that the environmental degradation of the planet, as a consequence of technologies arising from scientific thought, cannot be understood without considering the attitude towards nature, deeply rooted in Christian dogma. The Christian belief segregates the sacred sphere from the natural environment, thus assigning it merely the role of a supporting structure for human life. In Pattberg's (2007) terms, the history of creation is essentially a story of authorization and legitimization. God transfers his unlimited authority over all living creatures of the world to man, making him "Lord of nature" (Pattberg, 2007). The Lord of nature, but not by God's delegation, rather by class elevation, became the foundational image of modern science, crafted by Francis Bacon in the early 16th century. Bacon reshaped the Christian narrative, prioritizing man's domination over nature in the hands of the emerging bourgeois class, in the form of scientific knowledge. In this sense, Bacon incorporated the full symbolic burden of Judeo-Christianity into the relationship between man and nature, minimizing the biblical and institutional burden. After four centuries of scientific-Christian ideology, Popper (1994) declares:

"...this idea, this dangerous idea, of man's mastery over nature—of men like gods—has been one of the most influential of the ideas through which the religion of science has transformed our world". (p. 85–86)

Since Francis Bacon, the relationship between scientific knowledge and imperial power has gone hand in hand, serving as an ideological foundation for the English



colonial expansion and its ecological imperialism (Clark and Foster, 2009; Oppermann, 2007).

The expansion of English imperialism in Australia, Canada, India, and Africa involved a territorial growth where violence, inherent in racism against the "others" (who were naturalized) and against nature, reached extraordinary levels. As the frontiers expanded, so did the ideology that accompanied it: the line separating being from non-being. The prejudice of cheap (*i.e.*, those without value or with very little) acquired a status of universality and civility; this period marked the flourishing of natural sciences and the consolidation of social sciences that continue to shape us today.

Although the English empire's expansion was global, the Peace of Westphalia treaties (1648) temporarily preserved certain levels of "respect and diplomacy" among the newly configured states in Europe, not without internal conflicts, such as the Franco-Dutch and Anglo-Dutch wars, centered on the control of links in the ecological-world commercialization chain of the time.

An aspect of interest resulting from the new world order that emerged after the Peace of Westphalia treaties is the partitioning of Africa, a couple of centuries later. Africa, the shared frontier, unleashed the most brutal definitions of the "cheap" concept on a population already racialized and barbarized (unlike India, for example), the notion of plundering nature reached its current scale. This period also saw the formation of disciplinary ecology, within the English metropolis (late 19th century). The ecological imperialism envisioned by Bacon turned Africa into a blood-soaked canvas.

Lenin's (1963) text Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism (a popular sketch) points out that the defining



feature of the late 19th century was the end of global partitioning; the capitalist countries had completed the occupation of the territories that were previously under imperial dispute. Lenin argued that this partitioning was not final, as it would be subject to continuous re-partitioning by imperial forces. Lenin was not wrong; since then, contemporary history has been marked by conflicts tied to the acquisition of cheap nature and labor, indispensable for capitalist reproduction.

Following the 30 years of war (1914-1945) between European imperial blocks, emerged —as a sort of *satellite* metropolis of English imperialism— the United States, and became the great epicenter of violence and the *legitimate* actor in the control and plundering of the frontiers of capital. English modernity was ontologically and ethically transferred to U.S. imperialism. Slight distinguishing features appeared, such as cultural exceptionalism, an invention of the idea that the United States is a unique country, even morally "superior" for historical, ideological, or religious reasons. This is nothing more than a social metanarrative that reconfirms the ontological determinants once established in a frontier of capital, now reshaped by Christendom into *rational* dualism.

#### Crisis of Frontiers: Globalization As a Capitalist Trick

The consumer society, designed as a consequence of the Great Depression of the 1930s, reached its fullest expression after World War II. The consequences of these policies, associated with diversified technological development and the inclusion of growing human masses into the consumer society, began to have local and regional environmental consequences. This phenomenon has recently been called the Great Acceleration (of capitalism) (Steffen *et al.*, 2011).

However, with the Great Acceleration also began the great alarm: capitalism was exhausting the frontiers of crisis and plunder, upon which it is highly dependent.

In Latin America, this alarm translated into the militarization of the region, primarily in the most industrialized countries, in order to reconvert them into first-order borders; that is, solely as sources of cheap nature and labor. This process began with the militarization of certain countries in the 1960s and intensified in the next decade. After this period of violent repression, for the transformation/domestication of the socio-economic order (shock doctrine), it became unacceptable for the metropolis of *democracy* and imperial *freedom* to openly support and maintain these regimes of terror. The moment for neoliberalism arrived, and violence would now be institutional and scientific; the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and policies of debt and structural adjustment were the most elegant tools the total market found to guarantee the functioning of frontiers, now under implicit coercion.

At the same time, part of the real economy of the United States (its industrial component) would move to Southeast Asia and China, seeking the maximization of capital through cheap labor. From the industrial society that characterized 20th-century U.S., only the consumer society and the superstructure of the technological society remained. On the other hand, the financial and stock market economy would emerge as a new body of globalized life. Economies crossing the globe were combined with the *gift* of socializing a technology created for military purposes: communication via the internet. Now, "everyone" was globalized and connected, though only a few.



Veltmeyer (2019) suggests that globalization was a trick to strengthen monopolies in capitalist production chains, supported by the interests of certain nation-states. The popularity of the period was more related to the liberal ideology (the third way politics) and myths of communication and/or entertainment technologies. As a strategy for frontiers, it was designed to benefit the interests of imperial powers by opening markets in weaker countries.

This period's iconic event was the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York City in September 2001. It is worth mentioning a phenomenon seldom discussed in literature, which could be causally related to the attack on these towers. In November 1999, the World Trade Organization convention was held in Seattle, United States, an organization that, in just a few years of globalization, had embodied the rejection of various organizations, including labor, environmental, human rights, and indigenous groups. Two years later, the Patriot Act would be enacted, a legal instrument that opened many legal doors for state security agencies to conduct surveillance on individuals, as well as legal action against any behavior, communication, or activity deemed harmful to U.S. security. This law, of course, found its justification as a consequence of the Twin Towers event, not the Seattle protests (Herrera, 2022a). It can be interpreted that, from the late 20th century, access to nature and cheap labor demanded, in addition to historical violence, high levels of social control and surveillance. On the other hand, the "excuse" for the redistribution (as expressed by Lenin) of fossil fuel sources and opium from Asia and Africa was clear (frontiers needed adjustment). But years later, imperialism as it truly existed was exposed; the 2008 recession came: the U.S. Empire was bankrupt.

Rafael Bautista (2021) suggests:

"... [that] the failure of neoliberalism is also the failure of capitalism; but not due to the accumulation of crises, since capitalism has always been in crisis, in fact, it needs crisis to continue its accumulation spiral, that is, it needs to put everything into crisis in order to legitimize its exponential ambition. What now makes this failure definitive are the finite limits of life, which have been responsible, since the late 20th century, for making the infinite, exponential expectations of capital impossible." (p. 206)

Thus, the world-ecology incorporated, into the limits of the expansion of capitalism's frontiers, a new condition: the planetary environmental crisis, represented by the climate crisis at the forefront.

# U.S. Imperialism in the 21st Century: More Control than Expansion, Amid Desperation

The phenomenon of the global environmental crisis, as a major accumulated effect of the *cheap nature* notion, is sometimes referred to as climate change or the climate crisis; but it goes far beyond the climate, encompassing soils, the water cycle, life in the oceans, biodiversity loss, and complex issues such as the imbalance or disruption of the nitrogen and phosphorus cycles on a planetary level. These processes are causing alarming transformations in the conditions for life on Earth: the world-ecology begins a new period, without a doubt, and capitalists are aware of this. In order to understand this phenomenon today, the planet will, by the end of this century, experience extreme climatic, biological, and ecosystem conditions compared to those known by human experience over the last 10,000 years, not just during European feudalism. Moreover, the



combination of climatic factors, pollution, and extinction rates also suggests that the planet will have very different ecosystem conditions compared to those inferred to have existed during the Pleistocene, about 2.6 million years ago. Assuming that these ecological transformations will not affect food production, as they did during the Medieval Climate Optimum (950-1250) or the Little Ice Age (1300-1850), is a grave mistake; they are already affecting it. Current technologies for food production, despite their misleading advertising towards the infallibility of automation, are highly dependent on ecological cycles. It should be noted that agriculture is nothing more than a modified ecosystem maintained in a selected ecosystemic stage; therefore, its intertwining with the dynamics of the planet's biogeochemical cycles is inevitable, and any scientific attempt to ignore this reality is irresponsible (Herrera, 2022b).

When we combine the capitalists' belief about the exhaustion of the necessary frontiers for the reproduction of capitalism with this reality, and place it in the context of enormous uncertainties, it is understandable that the capital empire is desperate.

Jason Moore (2022) expresses this desperate crossroads in these terms:

"Even as – and especially because – American ultraimperialism is unlikely to succeed; we must explain it. Desperation mounts as the Empire's hold is broken. As the end of Cheap Nature entwines with global warming's destabilization of world agriculture, the temptation to find a military resolution to capitalism's epochal crisis is extraordinary. For the planet's leading military-industrial complex, it's nothing short of irresistible". (p. 14–15)



The consensus that once allowed for a society complacent with the ideology based on the exploitation of cheap natures (both human and non-human), mostly legitimized by a moral and rational ideology, is now crumbling. Despite the capitalist efforts to resurrect the notion of the external *enemy* (terrorist, Islamic, Russian, or Chinese), people now perceive an internal enemy (to life). Thus, if the consumer society, the notion of the enemy, and the energy spent on transforming nature were fundamental forces for the expansion and consolidation of capitalism, they no longer convince; they now produce a deep moral conflict in individuals. The situation is nothing less than desperate (for imperial capital). Two centuries of idealizing a capitalist society and five centuries of exploitation, plunder, mirrors, and gifts are quickly falling apart. The fear that the great majority will rebel in favor of true democracies, discovering themselves alienated and domesticated, exploring their autonomy and freedom, merging life and work beyond the Protestant logic, and aspiring to different relationships with nature, is prompting extreme actions from the world's rulers, with unimaginable consequences.

Thus, as social sciences were instruments for the "naturalization" of capitalist society as the most advanced stage of humanity, as a post-French Revolution process, there is little doubt that digital social networks today have a similar task: to make a greater dehumanization of the human being "voluntary," in favor of the survival of capitalism. The class struggle of the last six centuries reaches a peak moment: there is no doubt that the voluntary and subsidized massification of digital social networks, with the huge effort to create artificial intelligence devices, has as its *goal* to weaken us for moments of epochal definition.



# Crisis of Ecological imperialism: Political Reorganization or a Rearrangement of Life?

We may be witnessing the twilight of the world order established at Westphalia. The rise of BRICS+ and the new actors involved in the re-partitioning of exhausted frontiers, as well as wars along the imperial periphery, point to this conclusion. Moreover, the global environmental crisis particularly its impact on access to food, water, and "livable" habitats—seems likely to accelerate events and, once again, shape the geopolitical arrangements of the planet.

Numerous analysts agree that the "one percent" (broadly understood as the planet's wealthiest and most powerful), comprising the great capitalists who manage imperial capital, has been divided into globalists and nationalists. These heirs of a highly monopolized world-economy may respond differently to the Great Desperation. Grosfoguel (in this same book) suggests that while the nationalists aim to rescue the current world capitalist system from its terminal crisis, the globalists-fully aware of the impending civilizational collapse of global capitalism-are getting prepared for a "controlled demolition" of the system. They envision a new world order beyond capitalism, one some have termed "techno-feudalism," where nation-states are dissolved and territories are left at the mercy of financial powers. The author warns that this model may, under a new ideology, perpetuate an ontological racism even more pernicious than that experienced over the last five centuries.

Meanwhile, Moore (2022), cautiously reflecting on recent history to consider possible scenarios, posits that alterations to the world-ecology could spell hardship for the majority in the short term. However, "against the neo-Malthusian 'collapse' narrative, this read suggests how climate crises have been bad for ruling classes. 'Dark ages' for



ruling classes may well be golden ages for everyone else." The author further asserts that, in world history, climate crises have often been "moments of political possibility" (p. 5).

While we may not align ourselves with the so-called "collapsists," from the perspective of dominant Anglodisciplinary ecology and the scientific biophysical evidence underpinning possible trajectories for the planet's ecosystems constituting the web of life, a pair of pressing questions arises. Moore suggests that climate crises in global historiography have been linked to new political arrangements, offering the potential for a golden moment for 99% of the population. The first question, then, is this: what will be the material conditions-specifically access to water and food-and who among the 99% will survive to endure some hardships? The second question is equally crucial: how can we be sure that the current climate crisis. which is only beginning to unfold, has any parallel in the past ten millennia of human history? Could this crisis prove to be far more destructive than any previously experienced?

For now, it seems our focus remains—however artificially segmented—first on the rearrangement of borders and the geopolitics of domination/control blocs following the collapse of the post-Westphalian world, before we address the global environmental crisis. This approach once again relies on Cartesian cognitive perception and its derivative technologies, rooted in concepts of cheap nature, cheap energy, and cheap life—trapped, in essence, within the irrationality of modern rationality. As Baruch Spinoza might remind us, we must transform the present without losing sight of the horizon of life. It is no longer viable to live under the ontological burden of the West. Recognizing this demands an understanding of what can no longer be reproduced.



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Notes on Yankee Imperialism's Cultural War against our Peoples: From William Randolph Hearst to Colonization 2.0

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#### 1. "You make the drawings, and I'll bring the war"

The Yankee Empire intervened in Cuba in 1898, when Spain was virtually defeated by the Cuban independence fighters. The explosion of the battleship *Maine*, anchored in the bay of Havana, where two hundred sixty-six American sailors lost their lives, on February 15 of that year was used as a pretext. The large U.S. press, which had been attacking the brutal repression of the Spanish colonial authorities on the island for seemingly humanitarian reasons, immediately blamed Spain for the explosion of the *Maine* and prepared public opinion to support the ensuing war.

William Randolph Hearst, the powerful media magnate, had sent one of his best illustrators to Cuba months earlier: "You make the drawings, and I'll bring the war," he said. And indeed, all the newspapers of Hearst's media conglomerate "brought the war" and legitimized it.

Lenin described the "Spanish-American War" — which would later be more accurately named the "Spanish-Cuban-American War" — as "the first imperialist war in history."



Thus, Cuba had the sad privilege of serving as the stage for the debut of the military power of modern imperialism, and later, the neocolonial scheme of domination. From a cultural standpoint, the new masters made sure that the Cuban people saw them as "saviors," "liberators," "civilizers."

The island ceased to be a colony of Spain to become a neocolony of the U.S., with a "Republic" status, which included, in its Constitution, a humiliating appendix — the Platt Amendment — granting the Yankees the possibility of intervening militarily in the country whenever they deemed it necessary.

With the island militarily occupied by the U.S. in July 1900, a very perverse cultural war operation was carried out: the so-called "Harvard Project." It consisted of inviting 1,300 Cuban primary school teachers to attend a course at Harvard University, where they intended to "brainwash" them and train them as submissive annexationists. They failed disastrously. Over time, it was proven that the Cuban public school system would become one of the decisive bastions of resistance during the six decades the country lived under Yankee neocolonial domination.

# 2. "We have nothing to learn from the United States"

The cultural influence of the U.S. was present in Cuba even when it was still a colony of Spain. According to historian Louis A. Pérez Jr., "progress arrived in Cuba from the colonial era in the form of American things," along with "ideas associated with progress, science, and technology, as paradigms of modernity and civilization." This identification of the Yankee and "the modern," "the civilized," "the advanced," inoculated in the 19th century, reappears time and time again throughout the 20th century and stubbornly persists into the 21st century<sup>1</sup>.

One of Martí's core obsessions was combating the awe of Latin American politicians and intellectuals before the U.S. model of "prosperity" and "democracy." "We have nothing to learn from the United States," he declared in an 1894 article:

Without arrogance, it can be stated that neither activity, nor the spirit of invention, nor arts of commerce, nor fields for the mind, nor original ideas, nor even love for freedom, nor the capacity to understand it, do we have to learn from the United States.

In his farewell letter, written the day before his death in battle, he reveals to his friend Mercado that the higher goal of "the necessary war" is "to prevent, in time, with the independence of Cuba, the extension of the United States over the Antilles and its force falling further upon our lands in America."

# 3. "Hatred and misery are posing a threat and being reborn"

It is very significant that the famous 1915 film by Griffith, which is cruelly racist, is titled *The Birth of a Nation*. All the terrible traits that Martí observed in the U.S. society are synthesized in this film. In the United States, Martí  $(1894)^2$  said:

The reasons for unity are weakening, not solidifying; instead of solving humanity's problems, they are being

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Pérez, L. (2016). *Cuba in the Imaginary of the United States*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Martí, J. (1894). *The Truth about the United States*. https://biblioteca.org.ar/libros/157587.pdf

reproduced; (...) how democracy is being corrupted and diminished, not strengthened and saved from the hatred and wretchedness of monarchies. Hatred and misery are posing a threat and being reborn.

The film industry was a decisive weapon in the cultural war waged by Yankee imperialism with the aim of manipulating its own population and extending its ideological projection worldwide. It was very useful for beautifying very dark pages of national and world history and justifying the most atrocious crimes.

The ethnocide committed during the "legendary" conquest of the West was depicted in a series of films where the victims, the Native Americans, played the role of "savages" thirsty for blood; meanwhile, their executioners, the soldiers and white settlers, gallantly defended their families and Christian values.

The absurd image of Native Americans —designed to be feared, despised, and hated— was a formula used as a model in other representations of the enemy of the moment. Cinema dedicated itself to caricaturizing Mexicans and Latin peoples in general, as well as Japanese, Koreans, Russians, Muslims, and all those "barbarians" who defend their rights and refuse to be humiliated by imperial power. These stereotypes have become deeply rooted on a global scale and today fuel the racist discourses of neofascism.

At the same time, Hollywood has exalted "heroes" and "superheroes" like Superman, Rambo, Captain America, and many others, along with characters portrayed by John Wayne and the actor himself, considered a "symbol of white America," a defender of the McCarthyist witch hunts and the doctrines of racist supremacy. Another mediocre actor, Ronald Reagan, a fervent anti-communist at the time and



union leader, denounced many of his colleagues before the inquisitorial tribunal presided over by McCarthy.

# 4. The "Purification" of Hollywood by McCarthyism

Although the ideological surveillance and collective hysteria provoked by McCarthyism spread to universities and other sectors of society, there is no doubt that it was particularly intense in Hollywood. They needed a film industry free of any "red" contamination to lead the cultural war against the USSR and its "contagious" messages. Anyone who had ever shown any sympathy for communism, no matter how distant, could not be hired in Hollywood.

According to analyst Iván Escobar<sup>3</sup>, that "dark period (...) revives part of its essence in the current culture of cancellation fueled by digital social networks." As David Cole (2003) emphasized in his article "*The New McCarthyism*<sup>"4</sup>, during the war on terrorism after the 9/11 attacks, "the U.S. government revived some of the old practices: from hundreds of preventive detentions, phone taps, and espionage networks to the deprivation of basic rights and fundamental freedoms."

The truth is that Hollywood, "purified" by McCarthyism and never neglected by the elites that protect the system and the timely censorship of the market god, helped, with utmost efficiency, to build the myths and narratives that have hijacked global subjectivity.

Hollywood made sure that most of the planet's population was convinced that the United States was the



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Escobar, I. (2022). A Brief History of McCarthyism: The Witch Hunt in the United States. https://ethic.es/2022/10/breve-historia-del-macartismo-la-caza-de-brujas-de-estados-unidos/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/facpub/74/

victorious power in World War II. It also took care of curing the so-called "Vietnam Syndrome" and folklorizing leftist figures, from Frida Kahlo and Evita Perón to "Pancho" Villa, Emiliano Zapata, and Federico García Lorca.

In this reinterpretation of history, to promote versions aligned with the system's interests, Hollywood cinema has been accompanied by the cultural industry in all its manifestations: video games, cartoons, comic books, music videos; an entire machinery that operates coherently without allowing distractions.

For Inurri Gorria (2022)<sup>5</sup>, "Yankee cultural imperialism does not only want to dominate the politics and economy of countries, it wants to dominate and shape the souls of society." He adds: "Thanks to Hollywood and Netflix, it has built a world in its own image and likeness, a global common sense, and a planetary imagination, taking capitalist culture, lifestyle, and civilization as a reference to follow."

Samuel Vega Durán, in his text *Hollywood and the Pentagon: The Propaganda Cultural Production of the U.S.*<sup>6</sup> *Department of Defense*, talks about "a long and prosperous productive relationship" between the film industry and the Pentagon. Through this relationship, the military provides financial support and all kinds of equipment to produce films in exchange for the right to make modifications to the script and beautify the image of the United States and its military. In this way, the much-vaunted freedom of creation, always mistreated by the merchants, must also give way to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See: https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7480173



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Gorria, I. (June 22, 2022). *The Structural Nature of War and Cultural Imperialism: Key Insights to Understand the Global Imperialist Offensive*. https://halabedi.eus/es/iritzia/el-caracter-estructural-de-la-guerra-y-el-imperialismo-cultural-algunas-claves-para-entender-la-ofensiva-imperialista-global/

the demands of the heartless "lords of war"<sup>7</sup> denounced by Bob Dylan.

#### 5. The CIA and the Cultural Cold War

British researcher Frances Stonor Saunders conducted an in-depth study of the costly U.S. operation after World War II aimed at steering European intellectuals and artists away from the USSR, communism, and Marxism. Her groundbreaking book, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, highlights the United States' creation of "an entrepreneurial coalition of philanthropic foundations, business corporations, and other institutions and individuals who worked hand in hand with the CIA" to establish an active anti-communist cultural front.

The most ambitious project was the Congress for Cultural Freedom, headquartered in Paris. Founded in 1950, it became a highly influential international organization with branches in over thirty countries. It awarded prizes, published works, and granted scholarships to writers and artists aligned with "Western values" while remaining deeply critical of everything behind the "Iron Curtain." The Congress combined rewards for loyal creators with timely punishment for dissenters, who were ultimately excluded from legitimizing circuits and silenced.

In 1967, journalistic reports and statements exposed the CIA's funding of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, unveiling that this supposedly generous and "free" organization was, in fact, a Frankenstein's monster crafted by the United States. It later operated under the name



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> On this same topic, Jon Illescas has recommended the documentary *Hollywood and the Pentagon: Dangerous Liaisons*, directed by Maria Pia Mascaro and Jean-Marie Barrère.

International Association for Cultural Freedom until its dissolution in 1979.

# 6. Mundo Nuevo?

Argentine researcher María Eugenia Mudrovcic made a significant contribution to the study of the CIA's role in literary creation in Latin America with her book *Mundo Nuevo. Cultura y Guerra Fría en la década del 60.* (New World. Culture and Cold War in the 1960s). This work complements Frances Stonor Saunders' analysis.

The magazine *Mundo Nuevo*, led by Uruguayan scholar and critic Emir Rodríguez Monegal, aimed primarily to divide the progressive intellectual movement in Latin America and curb the influence of the Cuban Revolution and the anti-imperialist, socially just, and emancipatory dreams of Bolívar and Martí.

Mudrovcic demonstrates *Mundo Nuevo's* ties to the CIA and its selective intervention in the so-called "boom" of Latin American literature, subtly fostering highly publicized "breaks" between renowned intellectuals and the Cuban Revolution. She also details how Rodríguez Monegal orchestrated, behind the scenes, the 1967 awarding of the Rómulo Gallegos Prize to Mario Vargas Llosa in Venezuela. This maneuver sought to flatter Vargas Llosa's vanity, and distance him from Cuba and its cultural institution, *Casa de las Américas*.

In *Haydee Santamaría. Hay que defender la vida* (2022)<sup>8</sup> (Haydee Santamaría. It is Necessary to Defend Life), edited by Jaime Gómez Triana and Ana Albo Díaz, readers find the shameful letter of resignation Vargas Llosa

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Gómez Triana, J., & Albo Díaz, A. (Eds.) (2022). *Haydee Santamaría: Life Must Be Defended*. Havana: Ocean Sur-Casa de las Américas.



sent to the editorial committee of *Casa de las Américas*, alongside a morally profound and striking reply from Haydee Santamaría, the Heroine of Moncada.

# 7. "Give Peace a Chance"

Capitalist cultural hegemony suffered visible setbacks during the 1960s, particularly among European and North American youth. The struggles of Global South peoples against colonization, especially Vietnam's epic fight and the haunting images of women and children burned by napalm, stirred a generation and fueled a new, vibrant peace movement. Artists with explicit social commitments gained worldwide fame, alongside figures like Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Mao Zedong, and Ho Chi Minh. The *Little Red Book* became essential reading and *Give Peace a Chance* an anthem.

Soon, however, the fashion industry trivialized the rebellion and profited from it. According to Manuel Salazar Salvo (2021)<sup>9</sup>, in cities like Chicago, New York, and Las Vegas, "flowery spectacles for tourists multiplied," while factories worked around the clock producing "hippie hats, Indian shirts, Mayan pots, and psychedelic fabrics." Drugs proved instrumental in neutralizing this army of rebels, according to Luis Britto García in *El imperio contracultural: del rock a la potsmodernidad.* (The Counter-Cultural Empire: From Rock to Postmodernity<sup>10</sup>. At the same time,



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Salazar Salvo, M. (January 13, 2021). *To Understand the Hippies: Sex, Drugs, and Rock and Roll* (excerpt from *Mafioso Connections*). https://interferencia.cl/articulos/para-entender-los-hippies-sexo-drogas-y-rock-and-roll-extracto-de-conexiones-mafiosas

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Britto García, L. (2005). The Countercultural Empire: From Rock to Postmodernity. Havana: Argos. https://culturayresistenciablog.wordpress. com/2017/08/03/el-imperio-contracultural-del-rock-a-la-postmodernidadpor-luis-britto/

the music and entertainment industries used censorship mechanisms to tame dangerous leaders or expel them from their pantheon if they resisted.

Jon Illescas' *La dictadura del videoclip* (The Dictatorship of the Music Video)<sup>11</sup> (2020) examines these relentless mechanisms, asking unsettling questions: "How did Shakira end up working for the U.S. President and Katy Perry for the Pentagon? Why are there so few socially committed artists during times of crisis? What is the relationship between music videos and the lack of critical awareness among much of today's youth?"

#### 8. Iraq: Bush's "Cultural Policy"

In his introduction to Fernando Báez' book *La* destrucción cultural de Irak. Un testimonio de posguerra (*The Cultural Destruction of Iraq: A Postwar Testimony*)<sup>12</sup> (2004), Chomsky emphasizes that the forces of the coalition led by the United States "could have (...) preserved the cultural wealth of Iraq, which dates back to the birth of our Western civilization and possesses some of the world's most valuable treasures." He concludes, stating that they committed "a grave and unforgettable crime."

Fernando Báez describes the wave of looting in Baghdad on April 8 and 9, 2003, following the city's capture by the U.S. military. The next day, on April 10, the Archaeological Museum was stormed by vandals "under the most deplorable and strange circumstances." Pieces of immeasurable heritage value "were stolen or reduced

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Báez, F. (2004). *The Cultural Destruction of Iraq: A Postwar Testimony*. Caracas: Alfadil Ediciones.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Illescas, J. (2020). *The Dictatorship of the Music Video: Music Industry and Prefabricated Dreams*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

to rubble," including "clay tablets containing the earliest examples of human writing."

Additionally, Naomi Klein, in *La doctrina del shock. El auge del capitalismo del desastre (The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*<sup>13</sup> (2009), links these acts of barbarity to the "postwar plan of the Bush administration."

The National Museum of Iraq was looted in the presence of complicit passivity from U.S. troops: 80% of the 170,000 valuable objects held by the institution disappeared. The same fate befell the National Library, "which contained copies of all the books and doctoral theses published in Iraq": "It was left a blackened ruin." Ancient editions of the Quran, held at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, were lost.

An archaeologist cited by Klein, McGuire Gibson from the University of Chicago, compared what happened to "a lobotomy": "The deep memory of an entire culture of thousands of years has been erased." "Baghdad is the mother of Arab culture," declared the elderly Ahmed Abdullah to the *Washington Post*. "They want to destroy our culture," he added.

As an illustrative metaphor of the U.S. "cultural policy" for occupied Iraq, Klein recalls that, "at the Guantanamo prison, there is a room known as *the love hut*, where prisoners are allowed to watch Hollywood films and eat American junk food." The aim, she argues, is to make them forget the tortures to which they have been subjected.

According to Klein, "Washington's plan for Iraq" consisted of "sowing shock and terror throughout the country, destroying its infrastructure, standing by as its culture and history were plundered, and then fixing it

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Klein, N. (2009). *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

later with an unlimited supply of cheap appliances and imported junk food." She concludes: "Like the prisoners in Guantanamo's *love hut*, all of Iraq was going to be bribed with Pringles and pop culture. This was, at least, the idea behind the Bush administration's postwar plan."

# 9. "An underappreciated facet of U.S. global power"

The Cuban historian Elier Ramírez Cañedo (2016)<sup>14</sup> has extensively studied "the cultural war historically carried out by Washington to this day." He focuses on evaluating "concrete and verified events, open and covert operations by U.S. government agencies, statements by the nation's leaders, and guiding documents of its foreign policy, both diplomatic and military."

In his essay, Elier examines the theses associated with this type of war found in books, articles, and various official reports. For instance, he explains how Zbigniew Brzezinski, in The Grand Chessboard, refers to "cultural domination" as "an underappreciated facet of U.S. global power." He recalls that Brzezinski himself advised Carter in 1979 to increase "the influence of U.S. culture on the Cuban people." Ramírez also references the "Santa Fe Programs," products of imperial think tanks in the 1980s, which emphasize cultural warfare against the socialist bloc. Additionally, he underscores the importance of analyzing "a document of extraordinary importance for understanding the current strategies of the U.S. government in the field of cultural warfare": The U.S. Army Special Operations Command White Paper of March 2015, titled Special Operations Forces Support to Political Warfare.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ramírez Cañedo, E. (November 25, 2016). *The United States and the Cultural War: Is It Just a Conjecture?* http://www.cubadebate.cu/opinion/2016/11/25/ estados-unidos-y-la-guerra-cultural-acaso-una-elucubracion/


Furthermore, Joseph Nye, the leading theorist of *soft power*, stated in an interview that U.S. global influence can grow "through values like 'freedom,' 'democracy,' individualism, press pluralism, social mobility, market economy, and the minorities' integration model." Nye also noted something particularly significant: "And let's not forget that our influence is now bolstered by the Internet, Google, YouTube, MySpace, and Facebook."

Nye's proud mention of the supposed U.S. "minority integration model" relates to another facet of imperial cultural warfare: obscuring the tragedies of racism, fascism, and intolerance toward "others" or "the different" with the illusion of false "diversity" and "integration" offered by the entertainment, fashion, and celebrity industries.

In June 2023, for example, the media covered the resignation of Disney's head of "Identities and Inclusion" due to the commercial failure of the new *The Little Mermaid* adaptation. This once again exposed the system's attempts to address a profound and grave contradiction—racism, rooted deeply in society—through efficient "Identities and Inclusion" departments in corporations that hypnotize citizens daily.

### 10. Colonization 2.0

In 1998, during the 6th Congress of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, Fidel Castro focused his speech on neoliberal globalization in the culture field. He described it as "the most important of all issues," "the greatest threat to culture, not just ours but the world's." He called it "the most powerful tool of imperialism's domination" and concluded: "Everything is at stake here: national identity, homeland, social justice, revolution... everything is at stake!"



Today, more than 25 years after that warning, it is evident that this *globocolonization*, as Frei Betto called it, has accelerated rapidly, primarily due to the development of information and communication technologies. We are experiencing an unprecedented cultural and ethical crisis, blending what is valuable, what should be preserved and cherished, with a deluge of irrelevant and "entertaining" messages. Culture has never been so degraded to mere merchandise, an empty pastime. The colonial presence in our lives and subjectivities has never been so overwhelming, nor has the cultural hegemony of a small group of corporations reaped such immense profits while defending the system's interests.

Another feature of *globocolonization* is the right's hijacking of words that organically belong to the left's repertoire: democracy, freedom, human rights. The main violators of these ideals present themselves as their defenders, using them to attack leaders and governments that resist submission. Associating capitalism with notions like "freedom," "democracy," "wealth," "pleasure," "fun," "modernity," "joy," etc., contrasts with the image of socialism as a "failed," "poor," "repressive," "antiquated," "totalitarian," "boring," "bitter" model.

Cultural colonization fosters amnesia, living only in the present, consumerism, frivolity, and an infatuation with what comes from the North, alongside the contempt of people for their roots, traditions, and origins. Through its tools—music videos, series, digital social networks—it promotes so-called "celebrities" (musicians, actors, models, soccer players, influencers, TV hosts), often individuals with little of real value to say. Fame is linked to their earnings, luxury lifestyles, love affairs, and gossip.



The goal is for new generations to focus on the personal lives of the "celebrities" and give all their attention to incidents that have no weight in the world's problems yet are made viral on social media. The imperialist cultural war seeks to demobilize the youth, to make them think only of themselves and never of others, to make them reject involvement in collective projects. In the previously cited book, La dictadura del videoclip (The Dictatorship of the Videoclip), Illescas points out that many young African Americans in the U.S. today have distanced themselves from paradigms like Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, or Angela Davis, to instead follow rappers adorned with gold chains, luxurious cars, and a harem of beautiful women. For the system, it is undoubtedly far more convenient for young people to admire a millionaire, drug-addicted musician than anti-racist fighters committed to changing the world.

The aim is to populate the imagination of children, teenagers, and young people around the globe with symbols, fetishes, and hypothetical American heroes. If the colonizing operation succeeds, the victims will end up denying, with shame, their roots, their origins, their customs, their land, and their *race*, obsessively wanting to imitate the gods of Hollywood's Olympus.

The message can be summarized as follows: "Save yourself and don't worry about others. Collective alternative projects to capitalism are utopian, unachievable, they've already failed, definitively. There is no possibility of realization." But alongside the incitement to selfishness, today we see the rise of forms of grouping that the system tolerates and uses when needed. Neo-Nazi groups may attract young people beaten down by the crisis, confused, unsettled, who cannot see their future clearly, who find no



answers to their concerns in traditional political parties, who are anguished in the midst of the uncertainty of these times.

These neo-Nazi groups present themselves to the youth as bearers of "new" messages, "modern" ideas, and "strong," "manly" symbols typical of the "winners," capable of raising the self-esteem of their members. They fight to halt the moral dissolution they claim comes with the mass arrival of "inferior" migrants—Latinos, blacks, Arabs—and the "communist" conspiracies of depraved homosexuals, lesbians, feminists, and bearers of strange, anti-Christian doctrines.

One must reread that pivotal speech by Fidel, delivered on November 17, 2005, at the Aula Magna of the University of Havana. There he asked, and asked the students present, how an ignorant, illiterate person could know whether the International Monetary Fund is good or bad, and that the world is being relentlessly subjected to and plundered by that system. And he answered himself: "Simply, they do not know, they cannot know." He also mentioned that the machinery of cultural domination, serving corporations and empire, spends millions on advertising to create "conditioned reflexes." And he concluded: "Lies affect knowledge; but conditioned reflexes affect the capacity to think."

Fidel thus anticipated the debates we now have about the impact of social networks on people's behavior and emotions. They do not summon you to analysis, to reasoning; instead, they demand immediate reaction, often guided by conditioned reflexes.

In that same speech, Fidel noted: "They say 'socialism is bad,' and by reflex, 'all the ignorant, all the poor, and all the exploited repeat: socialism is bad. Communism is bad...'" He thus described, in an exemplary manner, how the combination of manipulation and ignorance breeds a pathetic creature: the right-wing poor, that unfortunate



individual who thinks, votes, and supports his exploiters, the demagogic millionaires, the fascists, those who despise and use him cruelly.

In that way, culturally and spiritually subjected to the empire, they will end up as domesticated slaves. They will never blame the system for their failures; instead, they will blame themselves. According to the great Brazilian pedagogue and revolutionary Paulo Freire, the greatest cultural triumph of capitalism is this: that the poor consider themselves responsible for their poverty and absolve the system.

Let us not forget what Fidel used to repeat, paraphrasing Martí: "Without culture, there is no possible freedom." That cultured and free human being will be prepared to navigate all forms of manipulation.

In the face of the empire's cultural war, let us raise the trenches of ideas, which, according to Martí, are worth more than trenches of stone.



## The West: An Intentional Strategy Judith Valencia\*



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### Introduction

The unveiled imperialism requires paying attention to the garments it weaves to clothe itself or conceal its intentions.

Here is a POLITICAL PRIMER on those garments, deciphering RIDDLES: knowledge is power/power is strategy = understanding the strategy of power.

I hesitate on how to begin. I consider an invitation to thought. To disarray. I present some glimpses of a debate brewed in the West<sup>1</sup>.

Since 2002, I have been observing the evolution of the United States (...). I expected it to revert to a form of a massive nation-state (...), reminiscent of 1945–1990, when it stood opposite the USSR (...). Beyond Europe's downward spiral, the internal imbalances within the United Kingdom and the United States are so significant that they pose a threat to global stability (...). The Western crisis is the driving force behind the history we are now living. Some already saw it coming.

(...) has yielded many surprises (...) the ideological solitude of the West and its ignorance of its own isolation. Used to setting the values the world must subscribe to (...), it sincerely, foolishly expected the entire planet to share its indignation toward Russia (...). The ultimate surprise is almost materialized: the defeat of the West.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Todd, 2024.

To this disarray, I add between the lines a brief sketch of the "battlefield"/2024.

Emerging clarity reveals a deliberate international strategy by the West: EXPANSION THROUGH EXTERMINATION. An intention that compels us to think of an evolving **world** we are yet to fully understand.

- The imperialist Western civilization, in an internal critical situation, strikes with coordinated mercenary rules, both visible and concealed.
- The Russian Federation, governed by a State demonstrating cultural and military strengths and respecting national sovereignties, is ensnared by the West.
- China's active/militant silence, rooted in its *market socialism*: "one nation, two systems," branded as a 'systemic enemy.'
- Russia and China, jointly pioneering a global experiment in blending diverse cultures; sharing policies across terrestrial spaces and in both open and covert conflicts.
- Latin America and the Caribbean, once again zigzagging. Fleeing its history/towards history.

Some, more or less, stand stunned by PALESTINE and the crumbling of multilateral institutions plagued by officials aligned with *the Western imperialist intentional strategy*.

Simultaneously, on the same WORLD, events unfold among PEOPLES who weave an emerging political practice of counteroffense, denying the universalization of the West's political culture.

## Pathways of the Journey

A glance at the starting point: 19th-Century IMPERIALISM. The *agrarian revolution* paved the way for expansion. With land expropriated from farmers/agriculturists, the earthly/political meaning of wealth shifted.



The merchants of *colonial trade* (pirates, privateers, buccaneers, navigators) marked/exposed locations to plunder foreign goods and raw materials for manufacturing; along the way, they propelled the monetization of exchange.

English thinkers endowed the British State government with a *theory* formulating a 'regime of truth' to govern POLITICAL ECONOMY: the theory of competition/1747 regulated price-setting and, consequently, the monetary flow: MONEY. Wealth was no longer tied to land but to a non-existent construct.

The Industrial Revolution preceded/accompanied the *political revolution*. By 1848, the *bourgeois revolution* defeated *proletarian* utopia.

It is not until the 19th century that the *world market* makes way for the *world economy*. Accumulated MONEY begins to shape the world, ensnaring territories... crushing and annihilating cultures.

I am not debating: I assert it... I name IMPERIALISM as an INTENTIONAL STRATEGY, the expansion of the capitalist enterprise, INVESTING MONEY outside its national domains. Subsuming and embedding itself in foreign territories.

What kind of world does MONEY, invested with an INTENTIONAL STRATEGY of domination, map against/on different populations?

The Western industrial WORLD, governed by the "regime of truth" of POLITICAL ECONOMY marked by the practice of the English state government: the international division of labor/the Western labor process. The practical experiences of wars between 'European empires' shape the spaces<sup>2</sup>. Once profitable opportunities are exhausted, the internal MONOPOLIES decide to invest their profits in the global arena.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Berlin, 1885. The Partition of the World among European Powers.

Imperialism begins: 19th, 20th, 21st.

I follow clues from the evolution of historical/ theoretical guidelines that motivate my thinking and I take them as a starting point<sup>3</sup>.

We insist on this slowness, on this inertia (...) progress that generalizes until around 1830 (...). Ultimately, there will be no rupture, innovation, or revolution in the broad field of the possible and the impossible until the 19th century and the total upheaval of the world (...), a fantastic mutation that was to occur. (...) Since 1667, government *Orders* had multiplied (...). But the novelty of the Bank of England was to add to the functions of deposit and transfer banks, the function of a true issuing bank. Conscientiously organized, it was capable of offering extensive credit in notes whose value, in fact, greatly exceeded its real deposits<sup>4</sup>. (The sustained capital letters belong to the author.)

The exchange value constitutes the substance of MONEY; the exchange value is wealth. MONEY, in contrast to all other commodities, is the universal form of wealth relative to them. (...) The thirst for enrichment (...), the product of a specific social development, is not natural, but historical (...); this presupposes the full development of the exchange value and, therefore, a social organization corresponding to it. D-M-mp... P... M'-D' (...) M-FT (...) D-FT is the characteristic factor in the transformation of ... money into productive capital (...); it is the essential condition (...): the money form is actually transformed into capital, into value

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Braudel, 1984.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Theoretical Debate: I take them as a starting point

that produces surplus value (...). This relationship is not inherent to the nature of money; rather, it is the existence of this relationship that can transform a function of money into a function of capital<sup>5</sup>. (The sustained capital letters belong to the author.)

... The market economy was not the spontaneous result of a natural order (...), but the consequence of a legal order that proposes legal interventionism by the State... The freedom of the market requires an active and extremely vigilant policy (...). The State must dominate economic development (...); this is the problem of how to act or, if you prefer, the style of government (...). Liberalism must then be analyzed as a principle and method for the rationalization of and this is its specificity — the internal rule of the economy (...). What did not exist, they made exist (...): the rationalization of governmental practice in the exercise of political sovereignty (...). The reason of State is (...) the rationalization of a practice (...). The State is not a natural historical given (...): it is the correlate of a specific way of governing (...). What allowed its emergence? How did it come about? (...) What is the intellectual instrument, what is the form of calculation and rationality that allowed for governmental self-limitation, the self-regulation, in fact, (...) is now the law. Political economy introduced (...) a certain regime of truth (not truth itself) (...), whose basic device remains the same today (...): power relations (...). Politics and economics, which are not things that exist (...): it is something that does not exist



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Marx, 1971.

and, yet, is inscribed in the real (...): a new type of rationality $^{6}$ .

It is history. Thinking about the action of the MONEY INVESTED by the English in their colonial domains, *the theory of imperialism*<sup>7</sup> emerges.

# What to Say About the One Who, Arriving Last, Leads the Squad?

# England Extends its Borders over the Eastern Coast of North America

The Thirteen Colonies of New England—practical expression of the English political economy—declare their independence in 1776. In 1787, they are constituted as a nation. A vast territory—looted and bought—stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The industrial North and the slave-owning South unify political criteria after the Civil War: 1861–1865.

From the Declaration of Independence (1776) until the end of the Civil War (1865), federalist thinkers<sup>8</sup> debated expansionist intentions, making them public as State policy, most famously articulated in James Monroe's speech of December 2, 1823, where it was also declared as the "manifest destiny" of the "chosen people" to create a *new world*<sup>9</sup>.

By 1892, *The Tribune* of New York proclaimed that nearly a million millionaires had made their fortunes through "trade and investments" in banking and stock brokerage, including two in oil.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Valencia, 2023.



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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Foucault, 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Hobson, 1902; Hilferding, 1909; Luxemburgo, 1913; Bujarin, 1915; Lenin, 1917.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Hamilton, Madison & Jay, 1943

The Western political thought focuses on the United States of America as the *core nation* of the imperialist expansion.

Once installed in Guantánamo, occupying Cuba with the Platt Amendment of 1901, they take Puerto Rico in the Caribbean and the Philippines in the Pacific. They support the European blockade of Venezuela's ports in 1902, separate Panama from Colombia, and begin the usurpation of territory with the construction of the Panama Canal.

From the early 20th century, Washington's *foreign policy* becomes one of swiping at the world<sup>10</sup>.

Every selection leaves much to be said. I take *POLICIES* that, simultaneously, activate INTENTIONAL EXPANSION here and there: Roosevelt Corollary (1904), New Deal (1933), Marshall Plan (1947).

#### **Roosevelt Corollary**<sup>11</sup>

Once the naval blockade on Venezuela was lifted, President Theodore Roosevelt, in his State of the Union Address on December 6, 1904, announced the political interference known by his name:

Chronic wrongdoing (...) may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force (...) to the exercise of an INTERNATIONAL POLICE power. (The sustained capital letters belong to the author.)

In practice, the 'Corollary' was accompanied by a cascade of INVESTMENTS agreed upon with internal allies, allowing MONOPOLIES of private investors to negotiate resources and



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Valencia, 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Acosta, 2017; Morison et. al, 1987.

enhance—at a lower cost—the industrialization of goods and services processed within their borders<sup>12</sup>.

This is the case with Venezuelan oil: 1907–1939. Concessions were granted, operating under the active use of *dollar diplomacy*, favoring the interests of FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS (FDI) of its citizens.

#### New Deal/1933

Starting with the announcement of the 'Good Neighbor Policy,' President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in March 1933 introduced an 'economic and social program to combat the crisis.' Washington's *foreign policy* shifted towards multilateralism, with the proposal and signing of 'Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act' in 1933.

In America, there were ten Pan American Conferences between 1889 and 1954. At the Seventh Conference in Montevideo, Uruguay, in December 1933, President Roosevelt arrived and launched his *New Deal*: the formation of a *commercial bloc* across the Americas. He brought order to the continent, anticipating the Bolshevik<sup>13</sup> intentional initiative and preparing for the sounds of war in Europe.

The 'RECIPROCAL TRADE AGREEMENTS ACT' with Venezuela was signed by López Contreras in 1939 and later in 1972, it was denounced by Rafael Caldera: "The United States would purchase raw materials, forcing, by the commitment of reciprocity, the purchase, in exchange, of manufactured goods offered by the northern productive apparatus, under a preferential tariff advantage"<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Machado de Acedo and Padrón, 1987.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Valencia, 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Third Socialist International / First Communist International / 1919. Moscow. World War II / 1939.

The global POLITICAL EXPANSION of the New Deal leaves key clues in the summary text of the debate held in 1939. At the Walter Lippmann Colloquium, on the eve of the *war*, the U.S. delegation expressed their position: "The market economy (...) is not the result of a spontaneous natural order. (...) It is rather the result of a legal order, which itself suggests the existence of legal interventionism by the State"<sup>15</sup>.

Studies from the early years of the 20th century reveal how the export of 'MONEY' for investment, from industrial centers to the rest of the world, set the political guidelines for the formation of *international monopolies*, inaugurating and consolidating the strategic network of the world economy dominated by Western capitalism.

#### Marshall Plan/1947 [Truman Doctrine/NATO]

In 1947, U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall devised the European and Japanese Reconstruction Program.<sup>16</sup>

Between 1947 and 1967, private monopolies solidified multinational relationships, practicing the Truman Doctrine —which aimed to contain communism while simultaneously leveraging the instrumental actions of United Nations bodies, such as the Bretton Woods Agreements (1944).

The *war* destroyed the 'industrial parks'. However, USA-made technology would rebuild the industrial parks in Europe and Japan. *Multinational and/or transnational monopolies* emerged, tied to U.S. technological dependency, particularly in military production scale design. The



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> W. Lippmann, 1940.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> George C. Marshall: *European Recovery Program* / 1947. Truman Doctrine: *Military and Economic Aid to All Countries to Safeguard Them from Communist Expansion*.

postwar *Political Economy* ideology would invent progress and welfare through *development theories*, leading to the profitable formula of 'economic integration', a basic economic doctrine behind the creation of Common Markets: both European and Latin American<sup>17</sup>.

The 20th century: intentional strategy of expansion driven by INVESTMENT, resulting in the emergence of technological, financial, and military hegemony = Washington's POLICY as the matrix of Western civilization. Without knowing the day-to-day details, we can understand the INTENTIONAL STRATEGY<sup>18</sup> through KEY POLICIES.

In 1962, (...) President John F. Kennedy (...): After the launch of Sputnik in 1957, the Soviet Union began to increase its pressure on the non-communist world. For many years, I have been professionally interested in economic development issues (...), as well as countering communist methods such as guerrilla warfare and subversion (...). In the Alliance for Progress, and also in defending Latin America against the infection that communists are trying to infiltrate into it (...), we are working with a positive strategy (...). What are the fundamental forces (...) we must guide?

- The revolution in military technology.
- The revolution of modernization in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East...
- The emergence of economic and political forces in Western Europe and Japan...
- The revolution... particularly in the field of international communications (...).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Rostow, 1964.



 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 17}$  European Economic Community / 1957. Latin American Free Trade Association (ALALC). Montevideo Treaty / 1960.

In light of this (...), our strategy has five dimensions (...): associations between Western Europe, Canada, and Japan (...), considering the North-South dynamic (...) the MILITARY dimension... we must protect what we are building, or otherwise, there will be no freedom (...) our attitude towards nations currently under communist regimes (...). We have very good reasons to believe that the limited aid we have provided to Yugoslavia and Poland, over the years, which shows our willingness to maintain broad human contacts with their citizens, has been a solid long-term investment for the affirmation of national independence and human freedom principles. (...) We intend to attract countries currently under communist regimes toward the community of the free world, rejecting the expansion of communism and seizing specific areas of coinciding interests that we believe will emerge (...) with this spirit, we carry out our daily task in Washington.

The Marshall Plan, designed for the "reconstruction of Europe and Japan," was also *politically* aimed at containing communism. Its success, however, also transformed the power structure of the *global economy*, shaped by the *political economy* formulas of Western capitalism. The economic and territorial consequences of the Marshall Plan turned monopolies into multinational corporations.

The multinational frameworks of postwar monopolies entered into agreements with the governments of Latin American countries, governments committed to the Western capitalist strategy of *economic integration*; an economic policy spearheaded by ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), and agreed upon by member countries of the ALALC (Latin American Free Trade Association/Treaty of Montevideo, 1960).



However, ALALC'S progress was halted by regional political events. Cuban revolutionaries from the July 26 Movement introduced new terms to the debate. In response to revolutionary insurgency, the regional imperial strategy reconsidered its methods of interference.

Following the military coup<sup>19</sup> in Brazil in March 1964, a strategy was designed to experiment with the use of military force, align Brazil's wealth with U.S. multinationals, and eliminate the "internal enemy" opposing FOREIGN INVESTMENTS; this experience set the stage for the Washington Consensus and the Condor Plan.

With the novel strategic device of public and private debt, backed by government commitments, development projects were subjected to the monetary standards of the Federal Reserve, integrating local wealth into transnational interests (1964-1994).

After three decades of implementing this experiment, global networks of capitalist private enterprise seized control of the productive potential of national territories.

In 1994, Latin America and the Caribbean entered the "Partnership for Development and Prosperity", part of the Reorganization of the Inter-American System, at the Miami Summit of the Americas<sup>20</sup>.

The aim was to promote prosperity through economic integration and free trade, while fostering a growing flow of productive investments. An immediate decision was made to establish the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which would gradually eliminate barriers to trade and investment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> CNC Memorandum Puebla, April 16, 2003, FTTA.TNC/inf/116. San Salvador, July 9, 2003. Miami, November 17, 2003. [Memorandums Submitted by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela / FTAA].



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Coup d'État against President Goulart / 1964

As Colin Powell stated in 2002:

"Our goal with the FTAA is to ensure that U.S. companies control the territory stretching from the Arctic to Antarctica, as well as the unrestricted access to our products, services, technology, and capital throughout the hemisphere."

By the 1980s, the offensive of western imperialism intensified  $^{21}$ .

The next two decades would mark a period of maximum crisis for North America and the West (...). As it was proclaimed: "North American civilization is suffering from a fatal disease (...) With our Western allies, we have the precise capacity to survive (...) The Third War has begun, and it is not like the wars we know... The 1980s and 1990s must be the years we end the new Soviet imperialism... The true total Third War. It is fought at every level of life and society (...). It is about forcing them to surrender."

In 1992<sup>22</sup>, Ted Córdova-Claure argued:

"It seems that the hidden geopolitical objective was the destruction of the former defiant Yugoslavia — the one led by Tito — which had halted German forces in the Balkans and proposed, in the face of bipolar powers, an alternative solution based on non-alignment."

In 1992, George Bush stated<sup>23</sup>: " For the Cold War didn't end; it was won."

And in 2002, George W. Bush remarked<sup>24</sup>: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."

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<sup>21</sup> Nixon, 1980.

<sup>22</sup> Córdova-Claure, 1992.

<sup>23</sup> G. Bush, 1992.

<sup>24</sup> G. W. Bush, 2002.

## It's History. Ours

The file that argues "Venezuela: 'Unusual and Extraordinary' Threat" begins with the 1999 constitutional process.

By founding the Republic anew and reviving the cause of a "great homeland," the Bolivarian Venezuela interrupts the *imperialist continental strategy*.

The INTENTIONAL EXPANSION of the West includes "The Americas." The thirty years from 1964 to 1994 of *continental/hemispheric* legal alignment with Washington's strategic interests were about to conclude. Venezuela interrupts that course. The intention remains: to restructure the Inter-American System, creating a single continental constitution.

The purpose of this chronicle is to preserve the  $MEMORY^{25}$ .

The Cooperation Agreement between Cuba and Venezuela in 2000, by December 2004, was agreed to serve as the core body of what we now know as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA).

Chávez sought... he identified the imperialist swarm and set out to untangle the knots. He opened new "battlefields": a firm "No" to the convergence of schemes woven by Washington.

In 2000, Fernando Henrique Cardoso reigned over South America from Brazil, with Celso Amorim co-chairing, alongside the U.S., the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) negotiations, champions of the South American Community of Nations (SACN) proposal as the foundation for the *hemispheric free trade agreement*: It was nothing more than to bring together/to make the regional agreements converge. Chávez proposed a debate on new

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Valencia, 2009.

ideas. The debate would take time. In December 2005, he appointed a commission to draft the UNASUR Treaty.

Meanwhile, Chávez advanced with new initiatives. The times of ALBA coincided with Petrocaribe: Venezuelan oil as a unifying weapon among peoples, navigating the waters of the Caribbean Sea, agreeing on *countertrade exchanges*.

The peoples and governments of ALBA were intertwined with CARICOM in 2005. The temporal conjunction of Chávez and Fidel practiced the principles of ALBA-TCP within Petrocaribe, spreading through Telesur and becoming key components to shape the UNASUR Treaty. "It is not enough to defend sovereignty," Chávez said, "we must respect the territoriality of States; the idea of *countertrade exchanges*, sharing what we have as equals."

ALBA-TCP, as a geopolitical space, is one to which one can cease to belong if the government of a member State changes its political path: some enter, and others exit. It is the people, the practical platform, who ensure its temporary validity. Marching together, respecting different paces, guided by the understanding that happiness and sovereign dignity are part of an emancipatory cultural construction.

The counterrevolution strikes every day: preparing alliances and interventions to undermine the progress made, halting ALBA within CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), and, bit by bit —with cruel policies— attempting to restore a favorable correlation of forces for the FTAA and revert to 1994: restructuring the *Latin American system* by approving a continental constitution.

NATO sails across seas and oceans, with military bases and land enclaves.

## Testing the waters

## A cruel and complex world

- I lack the wisdom to fully comprehend it, I can only capture fleeting glimpses.
- The debate between different worlds has opened.
- Western civilization seeks to be hegemonic and universal.
- The dimension of cyberspace presents to us, on screen, terrorism stamped with the NATO seal.
- A multicultural world emerges.
- Western geostrategy presses in: Kiev, ISRAEL... Eurasia, the Middle East...
- Some skirmishes of Western interference spread across the globe: Haiti, Guyana, Taiwan—explosive hotspots.
- United Nations officials, silent in complicity, allow a policy of *fait accompli* through mercenary forces.
- It is clear: The Western strategy of intentional expansion is accompanied by extermination.

It is our duty not to be deceived or intimidated by the critical circumstances of the moment—2024—marked by insatiable onslaughts. Our militant task is to prevent IMPERIALISM from donning the cloak that hides its true nature.



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## Venezuela in the Geopolitical Agenda of the U.S. Empire

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n this occasion, we will reflect on the global geopolitical situation and its implications for Venezuela. Many argue that "the worst is over" and that we are now in a new chapter of history. As an electoral campaign slogan, this phrase has a positive feature, because it is true that the Bolivarian Revolution managed to confront the blockade, the blatant theft, and the imperial "sanctions," controlling the hyperinflation induced from Miami, stabilizing exchange rates, achieving food sovereignty, and recovering the country's economy. What would have led to a humanitarian crisis in other countries did not happen in Venezuela: welfare redistribution policies were crucial for the survival of the people during a genocidal aggression by the empire. However, as a geopolitical strategy, the slogan "the worst is over" could be very problematic. Unfortunately, the worst may still be yet to come. We don't say this to discourage the people but rather to be prepared. As the saying goes, "forewarned is forearmed." This is not about being alarmist but about being cautious and getting prepared, in advance, for potential scenarios of imperialist military aggression. Let me explain further.



The United States is experiencing a phase of imperial decline and is losing global economic competitiveness. Currently, it is the most indebted country in the world, and its main resource is printing green bills. Since 1971, the dollar has lacked backing in gold or any other reserve of value. However, while the dollar remains the dominant currency in international trade, the United States will be able to continue to assert its power. Nevertheless, the world economy is de-dollarizing, which means a loss of ground for the dollar and, eventually, a complete devaluation of the U.S. economy<sup>1</sup>.

After World War II, the United States imposed legal and commercial regulations through the Charter of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Agreements. Half a century ago, the U.S. had the technological and productive capacity to outcompete others through trade; but over the last fifty years, it has squandered resources in useless imperial wars, while countries like China have invested in technology and production, relegating the U.S. to a secondary role. Today, unable to compete within the rules of International Law and trade that they themselves promoted and organized, they systematically violate international institutions and resort to dirty war tactics to eliminate their competitors.

### The U.S. Empire's War Against Russia via Ukraine

One of the dirty war tactics employed by the empire is the one currently unfolding in Ukraine. How did they regain the European market? By 2022, 40% of the European Union's imports came from Russia, including oil, gas, aluminum, wheat, and chemicals, among other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Since the Ukraine war in 2014, countries such as Russia, China, India, and South Africa, among others, have been shaping a multipolar world based on respect for state sovereignty and the use of national currencies in international trade.



key elements for European production and consumption. Russian companies offered these products at reasonable prices. In fact, the entire European industrial base depended on affordable Russian gas. However, the United States sought to reclaim the European market by excluding Russian companies to the detriment of the European people; they did this by provoking a Russian intervention in Ukraine<sup>2</sup>.

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has surrounded the Russian Federation over the next three decades, setting up military bases on its borders and deploying nuclear missiles aimed at Moscow, in violation of multiple international and bilateral agreements with the Russians. After the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, Russia sought to integrate into the liberal international order and even expressed interest in joining the European Union and NATO, but its attempts were rejected. Western countries continued expanding NATO eastward, treating Russia as a potential enemy. For years, the Russians have demanded that this expansion stop, and President Vladimir Putin has wisely warned, repeatedly, in international forums, that his country is a nuclear power and that any escalation could trigger a catastrophic nuclear war with global consequences.

However, in 2014, the United States supported Nazi militias that led a coup d'état in Ukraine. These militias follow the ideology of Stepan Bandera, a Ukrainian Nazi leader from World War II, who advocated for the superiority of Western Ukrainians of "Scandinavian" origin over "Slavic" Ukrainians, whom he considered inferior and worthy of extermination. The goal was to eliminate Slavic Ukrainians and then advance against



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> To understand the script of the movie currently unfolding in Ukraine, it is necessary to review the document titled *Overextending and Unbalancing Russia*, published by the Rand Corporation in 2019.

Slavic Russians, on Russian Federation territory. It is important to remember that during World War II, the Nazi army, along with these Ukrainian Nazi militias, penetrated Russian territory via Ukraine.

Once in power, this CIA-backed Nazi group started, in 2014, an extermination war against Russian-origin Ukrainians in the Donbas region, which represents an update of the events that occurred during World War II. In 2015, Russia promoted peace agreements known as the Minsk Agreements, with the support of France and Germany. Although all parties signed the protocol, including the Nazi Ukrainians, the war continued the day after the signing, due to the U.S. order to not comply with what was agreed upon. France and Germany remained silent in the face of this. Subsequently, the Western powers began to hint at the possibility of integrating Nazi Ukraine into NATO, which would mean that any conflict between Russia and Ukraine could trigger a nuclear war, then, according to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO countries would be compelled to defend Ukraine in the event of a Russian attack. Furthermore, speculation began about the possible deployment of nuclear weapons in Ukraine. In response to this situation, how did Russia react?

In February 2022, Putin publicly summoned his ministers to explain to the Russian people and the "international community" the necessity of a military response to prevent a nuclear escalation in light of NATO's threats to admit Ukraine and transfer nuclear arsenal to it. The Russians had no choice but to initiate a *special military operation* in the Donbas region, as failing to stop NATO's



expansion and the advance of Nazi Ukrainians would lead to terrorist acts in the suburbs of Moscow<sup>3</sup>.

Within months, all Russian companies in Europe were sanctioned and replaced by U.S. transnational companies in the sale of gas, oil, aluminum, wheat, and more. Fifty years ago, the United States would have eliminated Russian competition through international trade. However, as we have pointed out, a decaying empire that cannot compete legitimately in the market resorts to this type of dirty war to displace its competition.

Thus, the United States regained the European market by "recolonizing" and "Puerto Rico-nizing" Europe, depriving it of its military, political, and economic sovereignty. The European elites have suicidally subordinated themselves to U.S. strategic interests, leading to an "industricide." The de-industrialization of Europe has accelerated, as the United States does not behave as a philanthropic organization providing oil and gas at low prices, but rather the opposite: now Europeans are paying five to seven times more for these resources than they did to Russian companies. The European people are facing unprecedented inflation and unemployment since the beginning of NATO's war against Russia via Ukraine<sup>4</sup>. In this way, the United States has delivered a checkmate: it excluded Russian companies from the European market, weakened the German economy, and pulled Europe out of China's Belt and Road Initiative, all without deploying a



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> On March 22, 2024, a terrorist attack was carried out at the Crocus City Hall, resulting in the deaths of dozens of people. Initially, responsibility was attributed to members of the Islamic State (ISIS). However, after the perpetrators were captured, it was discovered that the planning of the attack originated in Ukraine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> An example of this is Germany, which is shutting down and relocating a significant portion of its companies to China.

single soldier. And when Germany tried to negotiate with Russia for the import of gas in the fall of 2022, the United States destroyed the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that connected Russia with Germany. Simultaneously, on the very day of the U.S. state-sponsored terrorist act destroying the pipeline, the Baltic Pipeline Project was inaugurated, a new pipeline transporting U.S. gas from Norway to Germany<sup>5</sup>. Coincidence? The audacity knows no bounds.

#### Where is the U.S. Empire Heading?

Once the United States recovered the European market through its war against Russia in Ukraine, where is it heading next? It is not going toward Africa, although it will try to sabotage any nationalist or sovereignty-driven processes it can. In recent years, four African countries have already broken ties with the French *empire* and the unipolar world, aligning with the multipolar world, starting with China and Russia. In Asia, the rise of China, India, Indonesia, and Iran means that the U.S. has little room for maneuver, except to provoke a war with China from Taiwan, just as it did with Ukraine against Russia. In the Middle East, the U.S. empire, with its NATO allies, has lost all the wars in the past 20 years. So, where is it headed? For over two years, we have known that it is coming for Latin America.

In October 2022, the Biden administration published its national security strategy, prioritizing the recovery of Latin America in the face of China's rise and governments defending their sovereignty. Subsequently, General Laura Richardson, Commander of the U.S. Southern

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Seymour Hersh, a renowned American investigative journalist who has uncovered numerous scandals involving the empire over the past four decades, has published an investigation into who was responsible for the destruction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. The evidence points to planning originating in the White House. To date, the European Union has "failed" to identify the culprits.



Command, shamelessly stated that the natural resources of Latin America constitute "a national security issue" for the United States.

It is evident that the Monroe Doctrine, which celebrated its 200th anniversary in December 2023, remains in force. The U.S. sees any other power maintaining relations with the region as an enemy; for two centuries, it has considered us as its "backyard." However, now we face not a rising power as in the past two centuries, but a declining one; since it has lost its status as the hegemonic superpower. Now, its existence as an empire is at stake in Latin America, so, in order to be an empire, it must have a periphery to dominate and exploit.

The escalation is already underway. Two years ago, the process was just beginning, but now the imperial escalation is here. It is enough to observe the presidencies of Javier Milei in Argentina, Daniel Noboa in Ecuador, the coup plotter Dina Boluarte in Peru, Gabriel Boric in Chile, Bernardo Arévalo in Guatemala, Nayib Bukele in El Salvador, the attempted coup against Lula da Silva in Brazil<sup>6</sup>; the offensive of the right-wing in Bolivia, which is taking advantage of internal divisions within the MAS; and the siege and attempted "lawfare" against Gustavo Petro in Colombia, among other cases.

The empire is trying to recover the territory lost to China and sovereign governments. For example, the main trading partner of Chile, which since the coup against Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973, has been a U.S. colony, is not the United States but China. On the other hand, in April 2024, Laura Richardson met with Milei in Ushuaia to plan the installation of a military base in



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Brazil is deeply polarized due to the massive grassroots movement led by Jair Bolsonaro.

Argentine territory. Several military bases have been opened in Ecuador since the betrayal of Lenín Moreno.

# The Future of Humanity and the Fracture of Western Elites

Any analysis of today's global geopolitics must account for the fracture within the field of Western imperialism. Western elites are currently divided between two fascist, genocidal, and authoritarian projects: the "globalist" elites of financial capital, who convene annually in Davos, and the imperial nationalist elites. Both factions are fascist, racist, colonialist, and imperialist, but in different ways. The nationalists represent the openly fascist and imperialist "far right," such as Trump or Le Pen. The "globalists" are the elites of the top 1% of international financial capital, operating covertly and shaping global policies from behind the scenes. They manipulate the agendas of international forums and organizations - from the 2030 UN Agenda to the Davos Forum and the World Health Organization (WHO). While globalists are visible on the public stage, they do not run for office; instead, they finance the politicians they want in government positions, loyal to their globalist agenda.

While nationalists defend the sovereignty of their respective imperial states, globalists aim to dissolve states and all spaces of sovereignty to establish a single world government, enabling them to exercise absolute control over the planet. Their goal is to leverage new technologies to surveil and control the global population under a unified world government. Nationalists deny the planetary ecological crisis, whereas globalists acknowledge the ecological collapse and propose dystopian genocidal solutions, such as reducing the global population from 8



billion to 2 billion. To them, 6 billion humans are "excess" and must be exterminated-those deemed dispensable are considered as inferior races and peoples. Only 2 billion would remain, ostensibly to save the planet from ecological collapse. Nationalists question the legitimacy of COVID-19 vaccines, while globalists are the primary sellers of SARS-CoV-2 vaccines, which are now under investigation in Europe and the United States for their harmful effects on millions of people. Nationalists pursue authoritarian states through repression, whereas globalists seek to establish authoritarianism through new technologies that encourage passive acceptance of their domination policies, epitomized by the slogan: "You will own nothing and be happy." Nationalists advocate a Eurocentric vision of "humanism," recognizing humanity in only a select few Western peoples considered racially "superior." Meanwhile, globalists promote "transhumanism," envisioning post-human stage of civilization characterized by the robotization and computerization of humans through new technologies and Artificial Intelligence. Their objective is to create "superhumans" with robotic intelligence, memory, and "eternal life." What Hollywood once portrayed as science fiction has become a reality enabled by cuttingedge technologies. While nationalists exploit States to dismantle democracy and human rights, globalists strive for a global government with a pseudo-democracy where, as in Athenian democracy, the 1% elite would dictate decisions. Nationalists are openly sexist and homophobic, opposing abortion, feminism, and LGBT movements, whereas globalists present themselves as pro-abortion, feminist, and even pro-LGBT. However, these stances are part of a sinister agenda to reduce the global population. Nationalists boycott



some imperialist wars and seek rapprochement with Russia, whereas globalists have declared war on Russia.

In summary, nationalists aim to salvage the current global capitalist system from its terminal crisis. In contrast, globalists, fully aware of the impending collapse of global capitalism, are accelerating preparations for a new historical system beyond capitalism — what some call "technofeudalism." This system promises to be more authoritarian, unjust, exploitative, genocidal, and destructive to life than anything seen in the past 530 years of "modern/colonial Western capitalist civilization."

The conflict between Trump and Biden in the United States or between Marine Le Pen and Macron in France epitomizes the struggle between imperial globalists and nationalists. Despite their profound differences, both factions converge on many fronts of imperialist aggression against nations. For instance, regarding the Zionist genocide against Palestinians, there is no disagreement between them. Both support the war of extermination against the Palestinian people. For globalists, Gaza is a testing ground for genocide, where Artificial Intelligence is being deployed for the first time to annihilate a population. This genocidal laboratory is a prototype for future exterminations of other populations, as part of the globalists' macabre plan to address the planet's ecological crisis through population reduction. For nationalists, Gaza represents the ultimate fate of all "inferior races." Similarly, both factions agree on the blockade and "sanctions" (read: unilateral coercive measures) against Venezuela. Both support the destruction of the Bolivarian Revolution and the plundering of its natural resources.



## Venezuela: Focus of the Decaying Empire

In this global geopolitical context, what is Venezuela's position on the imperial agenda? During the ongoing U.S. electoral campaign, Donald Trump has repeatedly stated that they should invade Venezuela to "recover" the world's largest oil reserves. If he is not blocked by legal challenges or assassinated before the elections, it is almost certain he will win the upcoming presidential elections by a wide margin.

Many argue that Trump did not start any wars during his presidency, but I ask these people: what happened in Venezuela? What he initiated during his administration was a new type of war against Venezuela-a hybrid war-and now he is announcing a larger-scale conflict. Behind Guyana's territorial dispute with Venezuela over the Essequibo lies the interest of the U.S. oil company ExxonMobil, seeking to take direct control of Venezuelan oil fields. We must remain vigilant, as every time the United States plans a war, it fabricates pretexts, "fake news." Recall the case of Libya, where under NATO's umbrella and with its support, they invented a "humanitarian crisis" involving imperialistbacked jihadists. This served as a pretext to invade Libya and assassinate Muammar Gaddafi, allowing them to seize control of the oil pipelines, which plunged the country into a civil war and devastated what was once Africa's most prosperous economy. Along these lines, we cannot allow the Americans to plunder Essequibo's oil through the Atlantic Ocean. However, we must stay on high alert, as they could fabricate any excuse to launch military aggression against Venezuela. This is just one of several possible scenarios.

There are always possible and unexpected elements that can alter the course of history. Perhaps the United States will descend into civil war and implode as an empire. Analysts across the political spectrum acknowledge that



political polarization is so extreme that such a scenario is plausible, considering that the entire U.S. population is armed and legally organized militias exist. During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, people lined up for blocks to purchase firearms. This potential civil war within the United States would change the hypothesis of a warmongering conflict against Venezuela. Nevertheless, current trends suggest that imperial escalation is prevailing. Let us reiterate: "Forewarned is forearmed." Venezuela is a red line that everyone who identifies as being on the left must defend. The ambiguities and complicities of the pseudoleft regarding the imperialist aggression against Venezuela must be denounced by all. Therefore, we must resist like the Iranians, anticipating and preparing for possible scenariosactions that make the U.S. Empire tremble with fear and force it to halt its plans of aggression before undertaking a military escalation<sup>7</sup>.

# Venezuela, the Multipolar World and the "Chinese Model"

In the face of imperialist interference, the strategic alliance with the multipolar world and the development of ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) in the region is a matter of life and death for Venezuela. The multipolar world led by China offers a bloc of commercial, diplomatic, and even military allies in response to the blockades and "sanctions" imposed by U.S. imperialism. Deepening the alliance with countries such as Russia, China, Iran, South Africa, Brazil, and others is crucial for the future of Venezuela. Unlike the Cold War, where two ideological sides clashed (the capitalist world vs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Why doesn't the United States invade Cuba? Because the island is only 90 miles from Florida, and any outbreak of war would severely impact U.S. territory.



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the socialist world), today the confrontation is not between ideological blocs, but between the unipolar interventionist world, which violates the sovereignty of nations, and the multipolar world, which defends the sovereignty of peoples. What do China and Iran, India and South Africa, or Russia and Brazil have in common? These countries have profound ideological differences. What unites them is their defense of sovereignty against the interventionist unipolar world led by the United States.

That being said, it is crucial for Venezuela to deepen the originality of its path, outlined by Commander Hugo Chávez, towards 21st-century communal socialism, under the slogan "Comuna o nada" ("Commune or nothing" in English). It would be a serious mistake to imitate models. For example, today there are attempts within the left to imitate the Chinese model. But in my humble opinion, the Chinese model is not only undesirable, it is also unfeasible within the context of Venezuela. What is known as the "Chinese model" is the developmentalist path of capitalist restoration followed by Deng Xiaoping in post-Mao China, where popular power was eliminated, means of production and land were privatized, communes were eradicated, and environmental pollution was elevated to catastrophic levels. This is not the space to discuss whether the Chinese model is desirable or not: what I want to discuss here is whether it is feasible.

The condition for the "success" of the Chinese capitalist model was the strategic military alliance between the United States and China in the 1970s and 1980s, against the Soviet Union. The agreement between Mao and Nixon in 1971 sealed this alliance, which lasted as long as the Soviet Union existed. With the implosion of the Soviet State in 1991, a new period of imperial antagonism between the United



States and China began. But during the 20 years (1971-1991) as a strategic ally of the empire, China enjoyed the privilege of receiving massive investments and advanced technology transfers from the United States and Europe in exchange for cheap labor and the elimination of taxes on profits. This allowed China to develop and today surpass the United States as the technological and economic center of the global capitalist system. The condition for this "privileged" deal—of being a recipient of technology and capital from the empire—was its position as a military strategic ally. If we apply this model to the Venezuelan context, we see that it is not feasible.

Venezuela is not a "strategic ally" of the United States; rather, it is perceived by imperial elites as a "strategic enemy." This has enormous implications for the economy. The Chinese model of attracting massive capital investments and technology transfers from the West through fiscal incentives, cheap labor, and the elimination of export and import taxes is not viable in Venezuela, because companies would be sanctioned. No company will take the risk of investing in Venezuela-whether in free trade zones or special economic zones-because they would have to pay hefty fines for violating the U.S. blockade. Thus, the debate over whether the Chinese model is desirable or not becomes a sterile discussion, because within Venezuela's geopolitical context, this model is not viable. Even if it were desirable, it is simply not possible to reproduce it in the Venezuelan context.

Therefore, Venezuela's path must be its own. It is essential not to imitate models, but to look inward, to seek in its own particularities the originality of its path. "Invent or fail," as the decolonizing teacher Simón Rodríguez once said. The combination of communal economy, national companies respectful of the Bolivarian project, and stateowned enterprises is one of the ingredients of Bolivarian socialism. Among all these forms of economy, the priority for generating the anti-capitalist horizon of Bolivarian socialism is the development of the communal economy. But a communal economy is not enough if the productive processes within the communes continue to be destructive of life. It is essential to prioritize an ecologically sustainable communal economy; in other words, an economy for life.

Imperial aggression may intensify, but if the national economy develops by breaking the chains of dependency, producing ecologically sustainable economies, communal economies, and stopping the importation of products and food that can be produced within the country, Venezuela will be in a better position to face any imperial aggression.

Venezuela has all the ingredients to succeed, as long as it makes a decolonizing turn in how it constructs its processes of production and reproduction of life. I have no doubt that Venezuela will prevail!



This work, sponsored by the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - People's Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP), was completed and printed in Caracas in June 2025. o confront imperialism, it is necessary to build an order and a type of society that transcend capitalism and the cultural horizon that has given rise to it: modernity.

Modern imperialism exists as a tool that ensures the survival of a civilizational model and its network of domination hierarchies. If we fail to understand this web of subjugation, our anti-imperialist struggles will be insufficient.

The historical mission of the peoples who decide to break the chains of imperialism and colonialism is to unveil and confront, consciously and critically, the logic of the West, its foundations, its ways of relating and disciplining, as well as the profound economic, political, social, cultural, and psychological consequences of a system that feeds on wars, crises, and the annihilation of the "*Other*."

In the face of a decaying and transitioning capitalist model, exposing imperialism is a fundamental decolonial pedagogical process that must be undertaken in collective unity.

The deep crisis we are witnessing today could lead to a repositioning of the modern/capitalist world-system, unless the peoples unite in defense of dignity, sovereignty, and, especially, in defense of the reproduction of all life.





