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Vijay Prashad makes the telling of the truth lovable;
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For Prakash Karat, whose clarity about imperialism is my guide

Contents

PREFACE

This is a book about bullets, says the author. Bullets that assassinated democratic processes, that assassinated revolutions, and that assassinated hope.

The courageous Indian historian and journalist Vijay Prashad has put his all into explaining and providing a digestible and comprehensive way of understanding the sinister interest with which imperialism intervenes in countries that attempt to build their own destiny.

In the pages of this book, Prashad documents the participation of the United States in the assassination of social leaders in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and in the massacres of the people, who have refused to subsidize the delirious business dealings of multinational corporations with their poverty.

Prashad says that these Washington Bullets have a price: 'The biggest price is paid by the people. For in these assassinations, these murders, this violence of intimidation, it is the people who lose their leaders in their localities. A peasant leader, a trade-union leader, a leader of the poor.'

Prashad provides a thorough account of how the CIA participated in the 1954 *coup d'état* against the democratically elected president of Guatemala, Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán. Árbenz had the intolerable audacity of opposing the interests of the United Fruit Company.

In Chile, Prashad shows us how the US government spent $8 million to finance strikes and protests against Allende.

What happened in Brazil when the parliamentary coup removed president Dilma Rousseff from office in August 2016 is an example of the perverse practice of 'lawfare', or the 'use of law as a weapon of war'. The same method was used against former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who suffered in prison for 580 days as a result of a trial in which the prosecutors did not provide concrete evidence – just 'firm beliefs'.

Times have changed, and business is no longer carried out in the same way, but the underlying methods and responses of imperialism have remained largely unaltered.

Bolivians know this perverse politics well. Long before our fourteen years at the head of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, we have had to confront the operations, threats, and retaliation of the United States.

In 2008, I had to expel Philip Goldberg, the ambassador of the United States, who was conspiring with separatist leaders, giving them instructions and resources to divide Bolivia. In that moment, the US Department of State said that my claims were unfounded. I don't know what they would say now, when the participation of the US embassy in the coup that overthrew us at the end of 2019 is so clear. What will future researchers say who take up the work of reading the CIA documents that are classified today?

The Monroe Doctrine and the National Security Doctrine attempt to convert Latin America into the United States's backyard and criminalize any type of organization that opposes its interest and that attempts to build an alternative political, economic, and social model.

Over the decades, the US has invented a series of pretexts and has built a narrative to attempt to justify its criminal political and military interventions. First, there was the justification of the fight against

communism, followed by the fight against drug trafficking, and, now, the fight against terrorism.

This book brings to mind the infinite instances in which Washington Bullets have shattered hope. Colonialism has always used the idea of progress in accordance with its own parameters and its own reality. This same colonialism – which puts our planet in a state of crisis today, devours natural resources, and concentrates wealth that is generated from devastation – says that our laws of *vivir bien* ['living well'] are utopian. But if our dreams of equilibrium with *Pachamama* ['Mother Earth'], of freedom, and of social justice are not yet a reality, or if they have been cut short, it is primarily because imperialism has set out to interfere in our political, cultural, and economic revolutions, which promote sovereignty, dignity, peace, and fraternity among all people.

If the salvation of humanity is far away, it is because Washington insists on using its bullets against the world's people.

We write and read these lines and this text in a moment that is extremely tense for our planet. A virus is quarantining the global economy, and capitalism – with its voracious habits and its need to concentrate wealth – is showing its limits.

It is likely that the world that will emerge from the convulsions of 2020 will not be the one that the one that we used to know. Every day, we are reminded of the duty to continue our struggle against imperialism, against capitalism, and against colonialism. We must work together towards a world in which greater respect for the people and for Mother Earth is possible. In order to do this, it is essential for states to intervene so that the needs of the masses and the oppressed are put first. We have the conviction that we are the masses. And that the masses, over time, will win.

Evo Morales Ayma
Former President of Bolivia

Buenos Aires
April 2020

FILES

I make no secret of my opinion that at the present time the barbarism of Western Europe has reached an incredibly high level, being only surpassed – far surpassed, it is true – by the barbarism of the United States.

– Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 1955

Books and documents that detail the tragedies afflicted upon the people of the world surround me. There is a section of my library that is on the United States government's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and its coups – from Iran in 1953 onward, every few years, every few countries. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports make up an entire bookshelf; these tell me about the roadblocks placed before countries that try to find a way out of their poverty and inequality. I have files and files of government documents that had investigated old wars and new wars, bloodshed that destabilized countries in the service of the powerful and the rich. There are memoirs of diabolical leaders and advisors – the complete works of Henry Kissinger – and there are the writings and speeches of the people's leaders. These words create a world. They explain why there is so much suffering around us and why that suffering leads not to struggle, but to resignation and hatred.

I reach above me and pull down a file on Guatemala. It is on the CIA coup of 1954. Why did the US destroy that small country? Because the landless movement and the Left fought to elect a democratic politician – Jacobo Árbenz – who decided to push through a moderate land reform agenda. Such a project threatened to undercut the land holding of the United Fruit Company, a US conglomerate that strangled Guatemala. The CIA got to work. It contacted retired Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, it paid

off brigade commanders, created sabotage events, and then seized Árbenz in the presidential palace and sent him to exile. Castillo Armas then put Guatemala through a reign of terror. 'If it is necessary to turn the country into a cemetery in order to pacify it,' he said later, 'I will not hesitate to do so.' The CIA gave him lists of Communists, people who were eager to lift their country out of poverty. They were arrested, many executed. The CIA offered Castillo Armas its benediction to kill; *A Study of Assassination*, the CIA's killing manual, was handed over to his butchers. The light of hope went out in this small and vibrant country.

What other day-lit secrets of the past are sitting in my files and books? What do these stories tell us?

That when the people and their representatives tried to forge a just road forward, they were thwarted by their dominant classes, egged on by the Western forces. That what was left was a landscape of desolation. Humiliation of the older colonial past was now refracted into the modern era. At no time were the people of the Third World allowed to live in the same time as their contemporaries in the West – they were forced into an earlier time, a time with less opportunity and with less social dignity. Tall leaders of the Third World felt the cold steel of execution – Patrice Lumumba in the Congo (1961), Mehdi Ben Barka of Morocco (1965), Che Guevara in Bolivia (1967), Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso (1987), and so many others, before, after, and in between. Entire countries – from Vietnam to Venezuela – faced obliteration through asymmetrical and hybrid wars.

This book is based on a vast amount of reading of US government documents, and documents from its allied governments and multilateral organizations, as well as the rich secondary literature written by scholars

around the world. It is a book about the shadows; but it relies upon the literature of the light.

‘BRING DOWN MORE US AIRCRAFT’

Estados Unidos: el país donde
La libertad es una estatua.
United States: the country where
Liberty is a statue.

– Nicanor Parra, *Artefactos*, 1972

What is the price of an assassin’s bullet? Some dollars here and there. The cost of the bullet. The cost of a taxi ride, a hotel, an airplane, the money paid to hire the assassin, his silence purchased through a payment into a Swiss bank, the cost to him psychologically for having taken the life of one, two, three, or four. But the biggest price is not paid by the intelligence services. The biggest price is paid by the people. For in these assassinations, these murders, this violence of intimidation, it is the people who lose their leaders in their localities. A peasant leader, a trade-union leader, a leader of the poor. The assassinations become massacres, as people who are in motion are cut down. Their confidence begins to falter. Those who came from them, organized them, spoke from them, either now dead or, if not dead, too scared to stand up, too isolated, too rattled, their sense of strength, their sense of dignity, compromised by this bullet or that. In Indonesia, the price of the bullet was in the millions; in Guatemala, the tens of thousands. The death of Lumumba damaged the social dynamic of the Congo, muzzling its history. What did it cost to kill Chokri Belaïd (Tunisian, 1964– 2013) and Ruth First (South African, 1925–1982), what did it take to kill Amílcar Cabral (Bissau-Guinean and Cape Verdean, 1924–1973) and Berta Cáceres (Honduran, 1971–2016)? What did it mean to suffocate history so as to

preserve the order of the rich? Each bullet fired struck down a Revolution and gave birth to our present barbarity. This is a book about bullets.

Many of these bullets are fired by people who have their own parochial interests, their petty rivalries and their small-minded gains. But more often than not, these have been Washington's bullets. These are bullets that have been shined by the bureaucrats of the world order who wanted to contain the tidal wave that swept from the October Revolution of 1917 and the many waves that whipped around the world to form the anti-colonial movement. The first wave crested in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and in Eastern Europe, and it was this wave that provoked the Cold War and the East–West conflict; the other wave went from Vietnam and China to Cuba, from Indonesia to Chile, and this wave engendered the far more deadly North–South or West– South conflict. It was clear to the United States, as the leader of the West, that no muscular conflict would be possible along the East–West axis, that once the USSR (1949) and China (1964) tested their nuclear weapons no direct war would be possible. The battlefield moved from along the Urals and the Caucasus into Central and South America, into Africa, and into Asia – into, in other words, the South. Here, in the South where raw materials are in abundance, decolonization had become the main framework by the 1940s. Washington's bullets that pointed towards the USSR remained unused, but its bullets were fired into the heart of the South. It was in the battlefields of the South that Washington pushed against Soviet influence and against the national liberation projects, against hope and for profit. Liberty was not to be the watchword of the new nations that broke away from formal colonialism; liberty is the name of a statue in New York harbour.

Imperialism is powerful: it attempts to subordinate people to maximize the theft of resources, labour, and wealth. Anyone who denies the absolute

obscenity of imperialism needs to find another answer to the fact that the richest 22 men in the world have more wealth than all the women in Africa, or that the richest one per cent have more than twice as much wealth as 6.9 billion people. You would have to have an answer for the reason why we continue to suffer from hunger, illiteracy, sickness, and indignities of various kinds. You could not simply say that there are no resources to solve these problems, given that tax havens hold at least $32 trillion – more than the total value of gold that has been brought to the surface. It is easy to bomb a country; harder yet to solve the pressing problems of its peoples. Imperialism's only solution to these problems is to intimidate people and to create dissension amongst people.

But liberty cannot be so easily contained. That is why, despite the odds, people continue to aspire for alternatives, continue to organize themselves, continue to attempt to win a new world – all this despite the possibility of failure. If you do not risk failure, you cannot taste the fruit of victory.

On 2 September 1945, Hồ Chí Minh appeared before a massive crowd in Hanoi. He had never before been to the capital, but he was known by everyone there. 'Countrymen,' he asked, 'can you hear me? Do you understand what I am saying?' A few weeks before, in Tân Trào, the National Congress of People's Representatives laid out the agenda for the new Vietnam. At that meeting, Hồ Chí Minh said, 'The aim of the National Liberation Committee and all the delegates is to win independence for our country – whatever the cost – so that our children would have enough to eat, would have enough to wear, and could go to school. That's the primary goal of our revolution.' The people in Hanoi, and across Vietnam, knew exactly what Hồ Chí Minh was saying; they could hear him, and they could understand him. His slogan was food, clothes, and education.

To feed, clothe, and educate one's population requires resources. Vietnam's revolution meant that it would no longer allow its own social wealth to drain away to France and to the West. The Vietnamese government, led by Hồ Chí Minh, wanted to use that wealth to address the centuries-old deprivations of the Vietnamese peasantry. But this is precisely what imperialism could not tolerate. Vietnamese labour was not for its own advancement; it was to provide surplus value for Western capitalists, in particular for the French bourgeoisie. Vietnam's own development could not be the priority of the Vietnamese; it was Vietnam's priority to see to the aggrandizement of France and the rest of the imperialist states. That is why the French – in cahoots with the Vietnamese monarchy and its underlings – went to war against the Vietnamese people. This French war against Vietnam would run from 1946 to 1954, and then the mantle of war-making would be taken up by the United States of America till its defeat in 1975. During the worst of the US bombing of the northern part of Vietnam, Hồ Chí Minh went on a tour of air defences. He was already in his late 70s. His comrades asked after his health. 'Bring down more US aircraft,' he said, 'and I'll be in the best of health.'

Washington's bullets are sleek and dangerous. They intimidate and they create loyalties out of fear. Their antidote is hope, the kind of hope that came to us in 1964 as the Colombian civil war opened a new phase, and the poet Jotamario Arbeláez (translated by Nicolás Suescún) sang of another future –

a day

after the war

if there is a war

if after the war there is a day

I will hold you in my arms

a day after the war

if there is a war

if after the war there is a day

if after the war I have arms

and I will make love to you with love

a day after the war

if there is a war

if after the war there is a day

if after the war there is love

and if there is what it takes to make love.

PART 1

DIVINE RIGHT

Divine right is an old, established principle. It means that Kings have the right – ordained by God – to act in any way that they wish. Human-made laws are of no consequence beside the awesome power of God, and God's representative, namely the monarch.

In Delhi, towards the end of the 16th century, the Mughal Emperor Akbar began to have doubts about the idea of divine right. He established a translation bureau (*maktab khana*), where he asked intellectuals to read deeply into all religious traditions. 'The pillars of blind following were demolished,' wrote Akbar's biographer Abu'l Fazl. 'A new era of research and enquiry to religious matters commenced.' Part of the emergence of a nonreligious idea of sovereignty was the sense that the Emperor had to rule for the people, not based on his own God-given right. 'Tyranny is unlawful in everyone, especially in a sovereign who is the guardian of the world,' wrote Abu'l Fazl in *Ain-i-Akbari* (1590).

Nine years later, the Spanish historian Juan de Mariana wrote *De rege et regis institutione* (1598), which made the case that the people – he meant mainly the nobles – 'are able to call a king to account'.

Abu'l Fazl and de Mariana had sniffed the mood. Peasant rebellions had their impact. Their pitchforks were sharp; their anger a tidal wave.

Sovereignty gradually went from God and King to People.

A generation later, Louis XIV of France said – *L'État c'est moi*, the State is Me. His descendants would be guillotined.

PREPONDERANT POWER

On 6 August 1945, the United States military dropped a bomb that contained 64 kg of uranium-235 over the city of Hiroshima (Japan). The bomb took just over 44 seconds to fall from 9,400 metres and detonated 580 metres above the Shima Surgical Clinic. Over 80,000 people died instantly. This was the first use of the nuclear bomb.

Four days later, Satsuo Nakata brought the Domei New Agency's Leica camera to the city. He took 32 photographs of the devastation; each of these pictures – archived in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum – is iconic. The force of the bomb flattened the city, even though less than two per cent of the uranium detonated. Nakata took a picture of the office of the newspaper *Chugoku Shimbun* and of the Odamasa kimono store. The store's metal twisted into a whirlwind. It is a sign of the power of this weapon. As Sankichi Toge, a *hibakusha* (survivor of the atom bomb) and poet, wrote of that power and its impact, as the fires burnt down from the bomb's power in a city of 350,000: 'the only sound – the wings of flies buzzing around metal basins'.

Between 1944 and 1946, Paul Nitze had been the director and then Vice Chairman of the US government's Strategic Bombing Survey. He began this work in Europe, but then went to Japan shortly after the war ended. Nitze later said that he had believed that the war would have been won 'even without the atomic bomb'. This is the thesis he hoped to prove during his time in Japan. The destruction he saw was breathtaking; it resembled the European cities that had faced conventional bombardment. As his biographer Strobe Talbott wrote, Nitze 'believed that the measurements of the Survey at Hiroshima and Nagasaki showed the effects to be roughly the equivalent of an incendiary bombing raid'. The Japanese generals and

businessmen he interviewed told him that they would eventually have surrendered but that the atom bomb certainly made further war impossible. In November 1945, Nitze met Baron Hiranuma Kiichiro, the president of the Privy Council. On 26 July 1945, the United States, the United Kingdom, and China issued the Potsdam Declaration that called on Japan to surrender or else it would face 'prompt and utter destruction'. Kiichiro said he was moved by this threat to urge his fellow members of the Privy Council to surrender. He failed to carry the day. A week later, on 6 and 9 August, the US dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan's Emperor Hirohito surrendered on 15 August. Kiichiro told Nitze that the 'biggest factor' for the Japanese surrender was 'the atomic bomb'. The country, he said, 'was faced with terrible destructive powers and Japan's ability to wage war was really at an end'.

The immense authority of the atomic bomb had an impact on the Washington bureaucrats, even those who might have felt uneasy about its use. Nitze was one of them. He would have preferred that the atomic bomb not be used; but once used, saw its utility. It is why he would urge the US government to expand its massive arsenal. The point would not be to actually attack the USSR, but to ensure that the USSR was – as the US diplomat George F. Kennan said – contained, and then eventually rolled back. Nitze, more than Kennan, would shape US foreign policy for decades. With his team at the US State Department in 1952, Nitze formulated the clear objective of US power after the Second World War. The liberals in the US government, he said, tend to 'underestimate US capabilities'; he did not, since he had seen it as part of the Strategic Bombing Survey. He introduced a word – preponderant – that would become part of the formula of US policy planners. 'To seek less than preponderant power would be to opt for

defeat,' Nitze's staff wrote in 1952. 'Preponderant power must be the objective of US policy.'

The word 'preponderant' comes from Latin. It means to weigh more. The King is always worth his weight in gold. Now the United States claims the scale, its weight bolstered by the payloads dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

TRUSTEESHIP

Old colonial masters liked to think that they were directed by God to bring peace and civilization to the world. That idea of the colonizer as the peacemaker and the lawgiver shuffled into the grand discourses of modern international law. Natives were fractious, unable to be governed by reason; they needed their masters to help them, to be their trustees. The League of Nations Covenant (1919) assembled the lands of the natives into 'trusteeships', so that their masters could believe that their domination was sanctified by law. It was in Article 16 of the Covenant that the 'peace loving nations' – namely the imperialists – said that they had the 'obligation' to maintain peace and security.

European hypocrisy over terms like 'peace' was by then clear to the colonized world. The League of Nations Covenant was signed on 28 June 1919. A few months earlier, on 13 April 1919, British troops conducted a massacre in Jallianwala Bagh (Amritsar, India), where a mass meeting was being held in opposition to the authoritarian Defence of India Act of 1915. As many as a thousand people were killed on that one day. They were holding a peaceful meeting. The 'peace loving nations' murdered them. This was despite the fact that 'India' was a member of the League. Well, as the Indian papers – such as *Rajkaran* (November 1919) – understood

immediately, 'England secured a vote for India on the League of Nations in order to be able to command a larger number of votes.' There was no benefit for India 'in any way'.

The United States signed the Covenant. So did Nicaragua and Haiti. In 1909, the US had intervened in Nicaragua to overthrow President José Santos Zelaya who had ambitions of creating a Federal Republic of Central America. Such a project of regional unity was unacceptable to the US, which wanted to carve out a canal through Nicaragua to unite the two oceans (when the US turned its attention to Panama, Zelaya asked the Germans if they would be interested in a canal; this was a fatal error for him). The departure of Zelaya opened up space in Nicaragua for nationalists, including in the military. When they rose up in the Mena Rebellion in 1912, the US marines returned – and remained until 1933.

Haiti, which, like Nicaragua, was in the League of Nations, saw its people rise up against the pro-US dictator Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam in 1915, whose death in the streets of Port-au-Prince gave the US the excuse to send in the marines; they remained in Haiti till 1934. Fifteen thousand to thirty thousand Haitians died in the repression, though this did not stop a peasant rebellion in 1919–20 and a series of strikes in 1929. The leader of part of this unrest – Charlemagne Masséna Péralte (1886–1919) – and his band of *cacos* fought to defend the Haitian people's rights. He was shot in the heart by a US marine. Péralte was Haiti's Sandino, the Nicaraguan revolutionary who met a similar fate in 1934. Every institution in Haiti was hollowed out, their functions subordinated to the United States.

A 'peace loving nation' invaded two other members of the League in the name of peace. But these exceptions were already baked into the Covenant. It said quite clearly, 'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the

validity of international engagements, such as . . . regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace.' The Monroe Doctrine of 1823, which the US understood as its right to the hemisphere, was quite legal since it allowed the imperialists a right to its dominions.

Japan's representative to the League of Nations meeting was Baron Makino Nobuaki. His speech at the Versailles conference – tinged with naiveté – put forward a 'proposal to abolish racial discrimination'. Nobuaki's brief was narrow, as made clear by Foreign Minister Viscount Uchida Yasuya; this proposal would only apply to the members of the League of Nations, and not to the colonized territories. But even this principle was too much. Australia had officially adopted a White Australia Policy in 1901. Its Prime Minister William Morris Hughes would not tolerate such a proposal at the League. Both Britain and the United States of America agreed. The Japanese proposal fell by the wayside. Baron Nobuaki returned home furious; he was a patron of the ultra-nationalist groups whose role drove Japan towards its wars of aggression in Asia.

'INTERNATIONAL LAW HAS TO TREAT NATIVES AS UNCIVILIZED'

In the days of colonialism, there was no need for any justification. If a colonial power wanted to invade a territory, it could do so at will. Other colonial powers could object – and sometimes did – but this objection did not come on behalf of those who were being overrun; it came out of the competitive feeling between colonial powers. In 1884–85, the imperialist powers met in Berlin to carve up Africa. European powers and the United States vied for 'effective occupation' and 'spheres of influence', phrases that

disguised the brute and cruel seizure of lands and the suppression of people's aspirations. Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and the United States carved out the landscape. A decade later, only Ethiopia, Morocco, and the Sultanates of Majeerteen and Hobyo remained relatively independent. Within decades France and Spain would seize Morocco, and the two Sultanates would be taken by Italy, which would later fight a severe war against Ethiopia to seize it in 1936. All this was done through a legal framework which disenfranchised an entire continent to serve the needs of Europe and the United States.

John Westlake, the Cambridge University professor who pioneered international law and would later be a Liberal Member of Parliament, wrote in his 1894 textbook *International Law*,

> [I]nternational law has to treat natives as uncivilised. It regulates, for the mutual benefit of civilised states, the claims which they make to sovereignty over the region and leaves the treatment of natives to the conscience of the state to which the sovereignty is awarded, rather than sanction their interest being made an excuse the more for war between civilised claimants, devastating the region and the cause of suffering to the natives themselves.

To protect the natives, in other words, they must give up their land and resources to the colonizers, who must themselves come to an understanding through international law so that they do not go to war with each other; it is to the benefit of the natives that they surrender and watch the imperialists divide up the loot. That's the highest point of imperialist international law, which burrows itself into the conceptual framework of present-day international laws.

Legal fictions hovered over conquest, but there was no such disquiet over the massacres of entire peoples and cultures.

The First Geneva Convention (1864) emerged out of a sense of outrage at the large numbers of Europeans killed in battles in Europe. Two particular engagements disgusted the European public: the conflict in Crimea between 1853 and 1856, which claimed over 300,000 lives, and the Battle of Solferino in 1859, which claimed 40,000 lives in a single day. Out of these two wars came the First Geneva Convention and the International Committee for Relief to the Wounded (later the International Committee of the Red Cross). This law and this institution set the moral framework for warfare.

It would all fall apart during the First World War, when the technology of war eclipsed any moral framework. Chemical weapons and aerial bombardment removed the 'honour' in warfare, making combat a matter of technological superiority rather than bravery. The impact of aerial bombardment was the most significant, since it meant that the divide between combatant and civilians began to dissolve in front of the technological ability to bomb civilian areas far behind the front lines of the battlefield. Further Geneva Conventions (1929, 1949) would follow, each trying to ameliorate the harshness of the new technologies of death. The Nazis had no qualms about civilian deaths, the prelude being the bombing of Guernica (Spain) in 1937. But the Allies were no less harsh. In 1942, the British government acknowledged that its bombing was to damage 'the morale of the enemy civil population and, in particular, the industrial workers'. The 1945 Allied bombing of Dresden (Germany) is practice to the 1942 theory. The US novelist Kurt Vonnegut was in Dresden as a Prisoner of War. Later, he wrote a devastating book about the bombing called *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). The dead littered the city. 'There were too many

corpses to bury,' Vonnegut wrote. 'So instead the Nazis sent in troops with flamethrowers. All these civilians' remains were burned to ashes.'

The new technology of warfare – and the Holocaust – demanded that the West create the United Nations, and the UN Charter (1945). Europe had widened the jaws of hell for itself. Hell, on the other hand, had always been the condition in the colonies and for the colonized.

Thirteen hundred West African soldiers from Benin to Togo who had fought in the French army, been captured by the Nazis and held in a concentration camp, been freed and brought back to another concentration camp at Thiaroye outside Dakar, mutinied in November 1944 against the way they were being treated. They had seen the bombings and the brutality; they had thought they were on their way home to collect their war pensions. Instead, the French betrayed them, as colonialism always does. Their revolt was a cry into the dark. French soldiers opened fire and killed hundreds of them. In 1988, the brilliant Senegalese filmmaker Sembène Ousmane made a film – *Camp de Thairoye* – about this massacre. One of the key characters in the film is Pays, who suffers from the traumas of war, what used to be called shell shock; he cannot speak but can only grunt and scream. He is on guard duty. He watches the tanks circle the camp and tries to tell his fellow soldiers that the Nazis are back to kill them. His comrades say that he is crazy. The French tanks open fire. The Africans are all slaughtered.

'SAVAGE TRIBES DO NOT CONFORM TO THE CODES OF CIVILIZED WARFARE'

Young Winston Churchill went off to fight in 'a lot of jolly little wars against barbarous peoples'. In the Swat Valley, in today's Pakistan, Churchill and his troops mowed down local resistance with extreme violence. When he

reflected on that murderous war, he wrote that his troops had to be bloody because the people of Swat had a 'strong aboriginal propensity to kill'. The French borrowed a distinctly American word, *gook*, first used in the Philippines, for their war in Algeria, sending in their troops on *gook hunts*. It is the native who is the savage. The colonizer is civilized, even in his brutality. The colonizer can never be the terrorist. It is always the savage who is the terrorist.

Discussions around the First Geneva Convention in 1864 made no mention of the colonial wars. There was nothing about the terrible repression against the Indian uprising of 1857, nothing about the savagery in the crackdown against uprisings of enslaved people in the Americas, silence about the genocidal killings of indigenous peoples in Australia and the Americas – silence.

The silence would run through the Geneva Conventions, from 1864 through 1929 and into 1949. There is nothing to cite here to show that there is this silence – only that there are *no* references to any colonial wars in these laws of war. It was only in 1977 – as Additional Protocol I – that the Geneva process acknowledged that wars of national liberation were to be considered as armed conflicts under the framework of the Conventions, and therefore to be subjected to international law. But that was only because the formerly colonized, newly independent states in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) – formed in 1961 – *fought* to bring in this addition.

Till this happened, in the colonies, all interventions were legal, all attacks and massacres were legal. If the natives misbehaved, the colonizer could do what they wanted. The term 'gunboat diplomacy' exemplifies the nature of the lawlessness. Sometimes the liberal conscience had to confront its own brutality. Then, justifications had to be conjured up. In 1923, British officials

in London worried about the harshness of their operations in Afghanistan. But after a brief discussion, they concurred that international law – the Geneva Conventions – was not applicable 'against savage tribes who do not conform to codes of civilized warfare'. This was Westlake's 1894 textbook in a war bureaucrat's 1923 notes.

King Leopold II of Belgium and his genocidal regime in the Congo – which killed at least ten million people in a decade – was an embarrassment to the European project. He had to relinquish control of the Congo in 1908. But that is because he was too extreme. The principle that European colonizers could be lawless in the colonies was not challenged – the quality of lawless colonialism remained, only the quantity of dead became the scandal.

Later, when technology produced the ability to kill from the skies, anxiety remained for a brief instant and then was quickly shunted; the colonizers saw aerial bombardment as a way to bring civilization to the natives. The Italians were the first to bomb human beings from the air, when they bombed Libya in October 1911, just a few years after Leopold was removed from the Congo. Some newspapers complained. The *Daily Chronicle* described the scene vividly: 'Non-combatants, young and old, were slaughtered ruthlessly, without compunction and without shame.' The use of the legal word 'non-combatants' is significant. The editor of the paper – Robert Donald – tolerated war, but not slaughter. The Italian air force, which saw the value of the bombing, wrote in its communiqué from the field that the bombs 'had a wonderful effect on the morale of the Arabs', namely that the Arabs were terrified of the colonizers. Robert Donald's British air force would mirror the Italians in the campaigns against the Iraqis in 1924. British jurist J.M. Spaight wrote in *Air Power and War Rights* (1924) that aerial bombardment has 'almost limitless possibilities'. 'It can turn the old,

crude, hideous, blood-letting business into an almost bloodless surgery of forcible international adjustment.' The swift and deadly bombing runs shift the balance of forces so that 'international adjustment', or surrender of the native, could be hastened. That is what passed for the laws of war when these related to the colonized people.

That brutality would run long past the creation of the United Nations, long past the slogan of 'never again' that came out of disgust at the Holocaust. During Britain's genocidal war in Kenya from 1952 to 1960, the colonial police chief Ian Henderson led the most brutal pseudo-gangster operation. Henderson's book – published to great acclaim in 1958 – was called *Man Hunt in Kenya*; he was after terrorists and savages, and his attitude was fully in the saddle as he prosecuted one of the ugliest colonial wars of the 20th century. In 1976, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo dramatized the trial of Dedan Kimathi – the leader of the Mau Mau rebellion, who Henderson had captured. They meet in the cell – the national liberation leader Kimathi and the colonial policeman Henderson. 'Look, between the two of us,' Henderson says, 'we don't need to pretend. Nations live by strength and self-interest. You challenged our interests. We had to defend them. It is to our mutual interest and for our good that we must end this ugly war.' Kimathi responds, 'Do you take me for a fool?'

'I am a Kenyan revolutionary,' Kimathi said – a human being who stands against the lawless colonial wars. Before Kimathi was executed, he told his wife Mukami, '[M]y blood will water the tree of independence.'

NATIVES AND THE UNIVERSAL

Gradually, and with intensity, the movements for national liberation grew across the colonized world. These movements did not merely demand

political freedom against colonial regimes. We are part of the human race, they said, and therefore we are part of universal ideas of freedom and humanity. *I am a Kenyan revolutionary*, said Kimathi, but what he meant was also that *I am a human being*. No such ideas as that of 'the savage' could be used to remove those who had been colonized from universal principles. This was the essence of the resolutions that emerged from the League Against Imperialism meeting held in Brussels in 1927–28. The political resolution amplified this demand with its anger at the 'reign of terror' and 'brutal measures of repression' used against the national liberation movements from Nicaragua to India. Nothing, it was felt, can stand in the way of the demands of humanity to walk freely onto the stage of history.

Over the decades that followed, the national liberation movements grew in strength, endured the vicious attacks by the imperialists, and developed their own understanding of the essential unity of humanity. The racism of colonialism was not to be mirrored in the national liberation movements, which fought for universality and not for their own particular advancement.

The 1941 Atlantic Charter, pushed by US President F.D. Roosevelt, came with all the high-minded principles of universality that mirrored the demands of the national liberation movements. But, like US President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points (1918), Roosevelt's Charter was more bombast than reality. Anxiousness about anti-colonialism impacted the highest reaches of the imperialists – Wilson worried about the 1911 revolutions in China, Iran, and Mexico, as well as the 1917 Russian Revolution; Roosevelt saw history in the face, and it revealed that anti-colonialism would prevail after the Second World War ended. British Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee went before a group of West African students – electric with their hope for freedom from colonialism – in 1941 to say, 'The Atlantic Charter: it means dark races as well. Coloured people as well as white will share the

benefits of the Churchill–Roosevelt Atlantic Charter.' His Prime Minister Winston Churchill did not share this view. In 1942, he announced as the Allies landed in North Africa, 'I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.' Imperialists had to acknowledge the rising power of national liberation, but they were not going to give in without a brutal fight.

Just as Hồ Chí Minh announced freedom for Indochina in 1945, French troops returned to re-take the region, as they did in Algeria. The British would fight brutally to hold on to Malaya and Kenya but would accept the partition of India as long as their airbases in northern Pakistan remained untouched. Flag freedom was permitted, but the newly freed countries were under economic and political pressure to hastily join up to the imperialist military alliances. In 1965, after he had been overthrown in a coup, Ghana's first leader Kwame Nkrumah wrote a book called *Neo-colonialism*; that was the mood of the new period. The principle contradiction in the years after 1945 was not along the axis of West–East – the Cold War – but North–South – the imperialist war against de-colonization.

Roosevelt saw that the structural basis of the North–South divide, or more properly the West–South divide, was war. When he visited Gambia, then a British colony, in 1943 after the Casablanca Conference with Churchill, Roosevelt noted, 'The thing is, the colonial system means war. Exploit the resources of an India, a Burma, a Java; take all the wealth out of these countries, but never put anything back into them, things like education, decent standards of living, minimum health requirements – all you're doing is storing up the kind of trouble that leads to war.' This was not all high moral principle, but an acknowledgement of reality. Roosevelt had seen this pressure from Latin America, which moved him to the Good Neighbor Policy of 1933 that pledged nonintervention in the hemisphere in

exchange for drawing resources towards the war effort. Pressure from the national liberation movements and the resistance to intervention (in Nicaragua and Haiti) forced the imperialists to come to terms with the changing balance of forces. Even Gambia, which is not often considered a major front line of the anti-colonial movement, was home to the Bathurst Trade Union, which – with some assistance from the League Against Imperialism – led a general strike in 1929–30. This strike startled London, where the officials hastily tried to control the situation by recognizing the rights of trade unions and trying to buy off union leaders (through the Passfield Memorandum of 1930). But, as the Communist leader George Padmore wrote in *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers* (1931), these strikes – including in Gambia – were 'taking on more and more of an anti-imperialist character'.

The native said it was part of the universal. That had to be recognized.

UN CHARTER

In 1945, the United Nations came into existence. At the founding meeting in San Francisco, a Charter was drafted which articulated the highest principles of statecraft and international relations. The UN Charter drew from the failed efforts of the League of Nations, whose own documents struggled to come to terms with the complexities of universal jurisdiction and the reality of a colonized world.

On the ashes of Dresden and Hiroshima, the Allies fashioned the United Nations. Power was to be held by the five permanent members of the Security Council – China, France, the USSR, United Kingdom, and the United States. The UN Charter adopted the League of Nations's concern with how the 'great powers' must be responsible for international security. In

Article 39 of the Charter, the powers agreed that it would be the UN Security Council which would 'determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression' in the world. In the Council, the five permanent members would have a veto over the overall decision-making; it was a Council of the five rather than of the 51 founding members of the UN. In Article 41, the Charter goes on that it is the Security Council that 'may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions'. The UN said that these measures could include 'complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of air, rail, sea, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations'. This is the long form of the legal justification for the sanctions policy that would become harshest in our time.

If these did not work, Article 42 under Chapter VII allowed the 'member states' to use armed force against sovereign nations. Some 'member states' had more power than the others. One sought preponderant power. That was the United States.

It is important to recognize that the UN Charter provided the legal framework for lawless interventionism. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and not the almost two hundred states in the UN General Assembly, have the power to decide when and how to intervene against sovereign states.

From 1945 to 1989, the USSR operated as an umbrella against the fully lawless usage of these UN loopholes, these mechanisms to offer the old colonial states a back door to continue their colonial wars in a modern form. The importance of this shield was evident within the first decade of the UN's operations. The USSR boycotted the Security Council because the UN did

not replace the Nationalist Chinese delegate with the delegate from the People's Republic of China; during this period, the West weaponized the UN to authorize its intervention into South Korea against the Communist forces in the north. The USSR reversed its boycott as a consequence of this inability to veto the UN's action. It returned to the UN. The first 56 vetoes in the UN Security Council were made by the USSR. The importance of the shield comes mainly on the anti-colonial, national liberation question. It was the USSR that used its veto to defend the process of national liberation, from the struggles of the Palestinians to the struggles in South Rhodesia, from the South African freedom struggle to the liberation war in Vietnam.

In 1953, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. went to the United Nations as the United States ambassador. He was horrified by the way in which the new nations that came out of colonialism had a positive attitude towards the USSR. Lodge created a Psychological Strategy Board to advise him in how to make the Soviets appear like the imperialists. Arthur M. Cox, who would later head the Brookings Institute, wrote negatively of Lodge's plans. 'I think we have made a great mistake as a nation of assuming that because Soviet power and subversion is the greatest problem facing us today,' he wrote in a memorandum in 1953, 'it is therefore the greatest problem facing everybody else.' Cox was a liberal who respected reality. 'No amount of horror stories demonstrating the crimes of the Kremlin will convince millions of people in the free world that Soviet-inspired Communism is their main problem because they know,' he said sharply, 'that it is not.' Lodge was deaf to this. He understood that if the United States battered the USSR by using its vast cultural apparatus – from the media to the films – it could succeed. Paint the Soviets as the imperialists, went the final programme of the Psychological Strategy Board, call them the 'new colonialists'. 'While the Soviet Union preaches its concern for the liberation of dependent peoples,' the US officials

wrote, 'it has ruthlessly converted every territory over which it has acquired domination into a vassal of the Soviet state.' This was written in August 1953, while the CIA overthrew the democratic leader of Iran, Mohammad Mosaddegh.

'I AM FOR AMERICA'

The term used at the US State Department in its early years is 'hub and spokes'. The United States is the hub, and its allies are the spokes. In the first decade after the Second World War, France and Britain – the two old imperial powers – thought they could regain their place of primacy. This was not to be. Both France and Britain prosecuted debilitating colonial wars, from Malaya to Algeria, from Vietnam to Guiana. Key here was the rise of Arab nationalism, which threatened old colonial power; Nasser's Egypt gave support to the Algerian revolutionary struggles against the French, and to the Iraqi rumbles against the old king. These forces of national liberation had to be cut down if the old colonial countries were to maintain their power. The gambit by France and the United Kingdom to assert power over the Suez Canal and to dent the role of Arab national liberation – with the assistance of Israel – failed them in 1956; it was the last gasp of Europe leading the way. The United States was furious. It punished the old world and took advantage of the situation to assert its authority. Both Britain and France took their places as spokes around the US hub.

Of all the major industrial powers, the United States had been least damaged by the depredations of the Second World War. None of its cities had been hit by bombs, and none of its considerable productive base had been destroyed; its scientists and engineers advanced their skills to increase productivity in US manufacturing and to develop swiftly the technological

capacity to sweep ahead of the rest of the world. The total US casualties in the Second World War stood at just over 400,000. Without question, the US – with its massive industrial and technological advantages, and its military power – emerged after the Second World War as the pre-eminent power; it was not a stretch for Nitze to call for 'preponderant power', eternal power over the planet.

Meanwhile, just in the Battle of Stalingrad, 1.2 million Soviet citizens were killed. Soviet manufacturing was hit hard, as the Nazis bombed the industrial base of the USSR. Close to 32,000 industrial enterprises were put out of production during the Second World War; this was over 80 per cent of the manufacturing base located in the key areas of Belorussia and Ukraine. What manufacturing was hastily shifted into western Siberia was mainly for war production. Capital stock fell by 30 per cent. By 1942, two-thirds of Soviet national income was allocated to the war effort, with household consumption falling from 74 per cent of national income in 1940 to 66 per cent of a much-lowered national income by 1945. At the end of the war, the average Soviet citizen lost 25 years of earnings due to the cost of war. When offered a very small amount of the Marshall Plan – less than what was given to Germany, the key belligerent of the war – the USSR declined the money and relied upon its own population to generate resources. The USSR was in no position to exert its power across the world, except through the prestige gained by the Soviet people for their stubborn resistance to the Nazi blitzkrieg and through the global impact of Communists in the anti-fascist resistance.

Not only was Europe destroyed and the USSR weakened, but so too were vast stretches of North Africa and Asia.

As the war began to end, it became clear that the United States would emerge as the most powerful country: its industrial heartland was robust, its currency was strong, and its cultural industries had not suffered from the trauma of warfare.

A year before the World War ended, in 1944, the United States welcomed government officials from around the world to Bretton Woods (New Hampshire) for a conference on the new world order. It was clear that this was not a conference of equals, but it was a meeting to dictate terms of surrender. The future of Europe had to be settled first before the US could tackle the rest of the world. Europe was not only bankrupt, but its various currencies had no value (many of them had been yoked to the Nazi Reichsmark); the United States pegged European currencies to the Dollar, which was then pegged to the price of gold (at the rate of $35 per ounce). Out of this conference came the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Their purpose was to rebuild a destroyed world and to stabilize capitalist turbulence.

At Bretton Woods, the US delegation came to undermine European power. Already in Article VII of the Lend-Lease Agreement in February 1942, the United States had made it clear to the British that their 'imperial preferences' system, whereby Britain dominated the economic lives of its colonies to the detriment of other colonial powers, had to end. Britain, in debt and despair, would have to take its place just behind the United States, not ahead of it. Senator Robert Wagner, who was the chair of the Senate Banking Committee, told the US Treasury Secretary Robert Morgenthau and his associate Harry Dexter White at Bretton Woods that the European quotas in the Bank and Fund must not be increased because they still have colonies. White said, 'I think the Queen of the Netherlands would be very disturbed if you did anything [with regard to the Dutch East Indies].'

Wagner answered, 'The Queen? She is a Queen, but she is not my Queen. I am for America.' In February 1947, US Secretary of State Dean Acheson said, 'There are only two powers left. The British are finished.' He might as well have said all the old colonial powers are slowly dying off; with the Soviets in grave trouble, it was more accurate to say that the United States had emerged out of the war as first amongst unequals.

In 1947, George C. Marshall, the US Secretary of State, gave a lecture at Harvard University about what would be called the Marshall Plan. The United States would pledge $12 billion to the Europeans to redevelop their continent. Meanwhile, the US urged the European states to form some kind of political unity, 'some agreement among the countries of Europe', Marshall said. Pressure from the US led to the creation of the Committee for European Economic Co-operation, which – in 1948 – would become the Organization of European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), one of the first major pan-Western European bodies. 'Europe' was born at Harvard.

Little doubt that by the time Nitze wrote his memorandum in 1952, the United States had exercised 'preponderant power' over Western Europe. In 1949, at the initiative of the United States, Western European powers joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); NATO was the military aspect of European unification under the US umbrella, a move – as Acheson said – 'completely outside our history'.

There was no partnership here. The US dictated the terms. It had the money, and it had the industrial capacity.

Lord John Maynard Keynes went to both Bretton Woods and then to Savannah (Georgia) to sign the terms of the surrender. He asked if the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank could at least be situated in New York, so that they would not be under the full influence of the US

Treasury Department. US Treasury Secretary Fred Vinson said that they would have to be in Washington, DC; 'this was a final decision the merits of which they were not prepared to discuss'. Lord Keynes, distraught, went back home to London and died.

Western Europe was now one of the spokes for the projection of US power.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE UNITED STATES AGAINST COMMUNISM

Treaty organizations were the mechanism for the creation of the spokes. The pioneer was the Organization of American States (OAS), set up in 1948 inside what the United States had long considered its 'backyard'. The first meeting of the OAS was held in Bogotá (Colombia); it left no doubt as to who was in charge when its headquarters were established in Washington, DC, at the old Pan-American Union building. On 1 November 1947, a CIA memorandum worried about 'Soviet objectives in Latin America'. This worry defined the formation of the OAS. US Secretary of State Marshall did not come to Colombia with only a cheque book; he came with the full arsenal of anti-communism that had swept Washington, DC.

As Marshall sat with leaders of some of the hemispheric states, on 9 April 1948 a gunman shot to death Jorge Gaitán, a presidential candidate who was the champion of Colombia's poor; not far away, a World Bank mission led by its president John J. McCloy was in town to provide the intellectual cover not for a Marshall Plan but for the entrapment of Colombia's economy into the web of US transnational corporations and of the bank accounts of the Colombian oligarchy. People took to the streets of Bogotá, angered by the assassination of Gaitán; their unrest is known as the

Bogotazo. Marshall, inside the OAS meeting, said that these protests were 'the first important communist attempt in the Western hemisphere'. He was wrong about that. It was another gasp of a country that faced from 1948 a terrible phase of violence known – precisely – as *La Violencia*; the Colombian oligarchy simply would not permit the masses to enter history, and so they used the full arsenal of state power to execute hope from their country. In the name of anti-Communism, the Colombian oligarchy subordinated itself to Washington, DC.

The Conference centre was 'completely gutted', Marshall noted. 'Conference records and equipment destroyed.' The city, he told the delegates who met in the residence of the Honduran delegate, is in 'shambles and fires still burning'. While he spoke, the Colombian ruling class united to form a Conservative-Liberal government and arrested the Communists, who were later released for lack of evidence. Nonetheless, a 1949 US Council on Foreign Relations study pressed the case saying, '[I]t was clear that the Communists took advantage of the outbreak if they did not actually start it. They did their best to disrupt and discredit the conference.' The US played its hand effectively. 'Many Latin American governments were genuinely concerned over the threat of communism to the existing order. Practically all of them saw that they could lose nothing and might gain something by declaring their solidarity with the United States against communism.' The Final Act of the Ninth International Conference of American States, Bogotá, signed by the ruling classes of Latin America, pledged to 'prevent agents at the service of international communism or any totalitarian doctrine from seeking to distort the true and the free will of the peoples of this continent', namely to be governed by a caste of the oligarchy. Then, at the end of the Final Act, comes the language of epidemics – the oligarchies of Latin America will 'proceed with a full exchange of information' about

Communists and take 'measures necessary to eradicate and prevent activities' of the Communists. To *eradicate* is a word that takes on especial meaning given the pogroms against the Left in the hemisphere.

A few days before Gaitán's assassination, two young Cubans were arrested in Bogotá for distributing leaflets that wanted to revive hope in their region. Their leaflets called for four objectives: the overthrow of the vicious dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, the independence of Puerto Rico, the return of the Malvinas islands from Britain to Argentina, and an end to US control of the Panama Canal. These were basic demands of the era of anti-colonialism. The two students were Fidel Castro and Rafael del Pino Siero. They had come to Bogotá to help organize a Latin American student meeting. When they were released, they heard that Gaitán had been killed. Fidel, wielding an iron bar, joined the protest. 'These experiences,' he later told Katiuska Blanco Castiñeira, 'taught me about the mass struggle.'

The OAS, the Latin American oligarchs, and the US government (through multilateral agencies like the World Bank) set the terms for the hemisphere and for its spokes. These came swiftly around the world. The US initiated the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 (the Manila Pact), and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1955 (the Baghdad Pact). These 'treaty organizations' were created to yoke in the post-colonial states into a close embrace with the United States, and to encircle the USSR, the People's Republic of China, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the Democratic Republic of Korea. In February 1950, the USSR and the PRC signed a Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance. This is what had to be undermined.

Spokes had to be fashioned. This was class warfare. The classes that favoured imperialism were frequently the old aristocracies, the landed oligarchy, and the emerging capitalists; they were joined by forces of tradition – such as hierarchical religious orders – that understood clearly that they would be pushed aside by socialism and communism. The factory owner, the baron, the landlord, and the priest rushed to assist and be assisted by the CIA and its friends. It is these groups that colluded with the imperialist forces to overcome their class adversaries. It was class against class in the immediate years after the Second World War, with the CIA helping the ruling elites to maintain their property and privilege against democracy. The spokes were made in this class war.

If the parties of the workers and peasants came near power, or if they took power, and if they defied the rule of the imperialists, they would have to be prevented or ejected from office. The most common instruments used by the United States – without any mandate from the UN or by international law – were interference in elections and the *coup d'état*.

Those that appeared to be obvious allies had to be brought into line. It was too bad for imperialism that their natural allies in Europe had collaborated with the Nazis, while their decisive enemies – the Communists – had played heroic roles in the fight against Nazism. The Communists – from France to Yugoslavia – had the highest level of popularity. In this class war, the Communists had to be destroyed and the old social elites – even the Nazis – had to be reinstated to power. In West Germany, the CIA was quite happy working with a Nazi intelligence officer – Reinhard Gehlen – who formed the anti-Communist Gehlen Organization, which then was essentially absorbed into the West German Federal Intelligence Service,

which Gehlen ran. There was no embarrassment to have a Nazi as the CIA's main asset in West Germany, and none at all that this was the man who then founded and ran West German intelligence a mere decade after the Holocaust.

A CIA memorandum from 1949 admitted that the Albanian Communists in the National Liberation Front partisan brigades 'did fight effectively'. In nearby Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito's partisans beat back the Nazis with little outside support. The same could be said of Greece, where the Communist Party formed the bulk of the partisans. In the 1945 legislative elections in Albania, the Communists – as the Democratic Front – won all the seats. Observers from the United States and Britain grudgingly conceded that this was a fair election. Their favoured Albanians had cooperated with the fascists; no one wanted to vote for them. Their ears rang with the partisan song – '*Hakmarrje Rini*' – in which the voice of a young partisan asks for vengeance; there would be no class collaboration with those Albanians who had danced with the Nazis. This attitude ran through the Greek Communist Party (KKE), which was not in any mood to create a government of national unity that included collaborators. They went into the hills as the Democratic Army of Greece and fought a civil war from 1946 to 1949. Konstantinos Tsaldaris's right-wing government was bathed in monarchism and gangsterism (with its mafia-like *parakatos* on the streets), but it was also energized by money and support from Washington, DC. Dollars brought back to life the cadaver of Europe's reactionary political bloc. It had permission to use maximum force against the Communists. Washington would manage the world media on behalf of this doddery fascistic government.

Much the same sort of political equation was necessary in far-off Japan. There, the elites had all been compromised by their role in the brutal war in

Asia and then in the Second World War. The United States guided the early elections in 1946, 1947, 1949, and 1952. The US occupation forces struggled to bring the far-right (Liberal Party) and the liberals (Democratic Party) into coalition against the socialists. In the 1947 general elections, the Socialist Party won and its leader Tetsu Katayama served as the prime minister for a year. A month after his shocking victory, the Democrats and the Liberals formed the Democratic Liberal Party, whose formation was egged on by the US State Department and whose creation was well-funded by the CIA. The Democratic Liberal Party absorbed old fascists (Ichiro Hatoyama and Nobusuke Kishi) and developed enduring ties with big business and organized crime (Yoshio Kodama), going on to rule Japan for 38 years (the Democratic Liberal Party would become the Liberal Party in 1950 and then the Liberal Democratic Party in 1955). Whatever esteem lay with the Japanese Socialists and the Communists had to be undermined. Japan became a key spoke of the US hub.

It would appear that the most obvious candidates to become subordinates of the United States and of transnational corporations would be France, Italy, and Germany – the three most important Western allies for the decades to come. But this was not the case. In France and Italy, the Communists emerged as the most powerful political forces – largely because of their leadership in the antifascist resistance. US Secretary of State Marshall told the Prime Ministers of both France (Paul Ramadier) and Italy (Alcide De Gasperi) that he would not write a cheque to the countries if they retained Communists in their ministries. In Italy, the Communist leader Fausto Gullo – as the minister of agriculture – had begun deep reforms in the countryside, including basic land reforms that had been blocked by an old alliance between the landlords and the mafia. Even the conservative De Gasperi could not rein in Gullo. In France, the Communists commanded a

full quarter of the votes, and played a key role in Ramadier's socialist government. 'I told Ramadier,' Marshall wrote in his diary, 'no Communists in gov. or else.' It was a direct threat. A wave of strikes in France and a mafia attack on Communist militants in Italy provided the two Prime Ministers their excuse. The Communists were removed from government. Washington blessed the Prime Ministers, and then paid them off. The money did not come only from the US Treasury. It also came from the transnational corporations. Exxon Corporation contributed almost $50 million to the Christian Democrats in Italy from 1963 to 1972. This was a soft coup against the Communists.

It was expensive tool-and-die work; at its end, the spokes were ready, and they – because of their class interests – remained loyal for decades to come.

'NOTHING CAN BE ALLOWED'

In May 1943, the USSR disbanded the Communist International. The Soviet Union – in the midst of the Nazi invasion – wanted to mollify the United States and Great Britain; the USSR wanted the Allies to open another front in Europe to relieve the pressure of the Nazi onslaught. In September 1943, the Allies finally landed in Italy. After the war, the USSR created a Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) to draw together its allies along the eastern edge of Europe (but including the French and the Italians). No Communist parties from the colonized world were members of the Cominform. Instead, they would become part of people-to-people communist organizations such as the Women's International Democratic Federation, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the World Peace Council, and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers. These

mass fronts provided the main contacts for Communists and their allies in the immediate period after the war; but there was nothing like the Communist International to use the resources of the USSR to spread revolution in the world. The revolutions that did take place, such as in Vietnam (1945), had their own dynamic with minimal assistance from the Soviets.

The main contradiction in the period after the Second World War was not between the capitalist powers – led by the United States – and the USSR, what became known as the Cold War. US President Harry S. Truman, who had authorized the use of the nuclear bombs on Japan, formulated a doctrine in 1947 to use any and every means to defeat – or at least contain – the spread of Soviet influence and of Communism. It was this Truman Doctrine that authorized the use of US assets to interfere in the elections in Greece, France, and Italy, and it would be the Truman Doctrine that justified the US use of asymmetrical wars and hybrid wars against the process of decolonization. The main contradiction of this new period was between the forces of decolonization (which included the USSR when it allied with anti-colonial national liberation movements) and imperialism. This contradiction – between North and South – rather than the Cold War – between East and West – shaped the character of US-led imperialism.

In 1953, the US National Security Council produced a report that candidly spoke of US interests in the world. The United States, the NSC notes, must make sure that 'nothing can be allowed to interfere substantially with the availability of oil from those sources to the free world'. It referred to the Gulf region, which had already become a key producer of oil for fossil fuelled capitalism. The United States must make 'every effort to ensure that these resources will be available and will be used to strengthen the Free World'.

That term was key to Truman – the Free World. The term emerged during the Second World War to refer to the countries that fought against fascism, although many of those countries – such as Britain and France – held colonies where they maintained authoritarian regimes. The United States government of Truman weaponized the term through a massive campaign of psychological warfare, which included Truman's Campaign of Truth of 1950 and the celebrated publication of Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), which made the case for the identity of fascism and communism. These were totalitarian and unfree ideologies, while Western liberalism was identical to freedom. The 'Free World' was the world led by the United States. What the US champions is freedom; its adversaries are the forces of unfreedom.

So, in this prison house of psychological warfare it is perfectly acceptable for the Free World to claim resources from the colonized world, which should be forced to surrender its wealth for the sake of someone else's freedom.

In 1950, Truman wrote to the Saudi monarch King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud about the renewal of US rights to the Dhahran Air Base – a military project that would secure Saudi Arabia's loyalty to the US. Underneath all this was the oil. Truman praised the King for his 'enlightened leadership' and for Saudi Arabia's role as a 'bulwark to peace in the Near Eastern world'. This 'enlightened' leader faced severe labour struggles in the oil region of Saudi Arabia from June 1945, which deepened in 1953. Communists played a key role in these mobilizations, which threatened the Saudi-US oil company, ARAMCO. Enlightened leadership, if it meant the swift dispatch of oil to the West, was allowed to use any means against the workers, particularly against the Communists. The Saudi monarchy was threatened by its own workers and its own Communists; but it used the Cold War to tighten its links with

the United States. Dhahran Air Base is located in the oil region, and so the deal to have US troops based there was insurance against any Communist-led rebellion. That same year, the Saudis agreed to a 50-50 split on oil profits within ARAMCO between the United States and the Saudis. This was the price that the Saudis were willing to pay; they would rather leech their resources to the United States to maintain their power rather than share the benefits of resources with the oil workers. The Saudi monarchy bound the United States to itself through the 1951 Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement. The defence of the Saudi monarchy – and its oil fields – was the charge of the United States government.

Nothing can be allowed, said the NSC document of 1953 – not labour unrest in Qatif, nor Communist organizations; not even the basic elements of the 'free world', such as a free press and the right to free association. A June 1956 strike by oil workers was crushed with the full force of the Saudi apparatus; whatever newspapers had emerged were closed down, and labour leaders and Communist activists were imprisoned on long terms. The oil had to flow. It was freedom of the oil that mattered, not the freedom of the people. Their freedom could not be allowed.

THIRD WORLD PROJECT

The US-instigated coups against Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954) took place when the Third World bloc was not fully established; the Bandung conference of the post-colonial states of Africa and Asia took place only in 1955. The Soviets made their objections in the UN, but the Sino-Soviet dispute was already on, and it would severely weaken the 'red zone' in its ability to stand fast against these kinds of manoeuvres. After Bandung, the

Third World bloc was stronger, and it was able to draw the Soviets in as a more reliable shield.

In December 1960, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution on decolonization. 'The process of liberation,' agreed the nations of the world, 'is irresistible and irreversible.' This resolution was the summary of major fights from Cuba to Vietnam, from Indonesia to Egypt. Over the course of the 1960s, a broad understanding emerged in the former colonial world about the necessity of freedom from colonialism and from imperialism. The temperament of the various national liberation struggles differed based on the class alignment of their leading organizations. It is this difference that fractured the new nations in the anti-colonial world. There were rightward leaning states and leftward leaning states, but each of them – from Saudi Arabia to Tanzania – would remain within the Non-Aligned Movement, created in 1961. By 1973, even the rightward states would acknowledge the radical agenda set by NAM in its New International Economic Order (NIEO). Indeed, even countries like Saudi Arabia and Brazil – steeped in monarchies and military dictatorships – found merit in the argument that the global economic and political order needed to be reformed.

New states that won their independence after the Second World War gathered at Bandung (Indonesia) in 1955. There they laid out the outlines of what would be considered a 'non-aligned' foreign policy. These were states led by political movements that had a range of class alignments and therefore of domestic policies. There was, however, broad agreement against the dangers of warfare (particularly nuclear warfare) and for the creation of the context for a national development agenda. It was these states – notably Egypt, India and Yugoslavia – that led the way for the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 and, that same year, the Committee of 24 or the

Decolonization Committee in the United Nations. This inter-state movement had a cognate in the United Nations through the Group of 77 (G-77), formed in 1964 at the UN Conference of Trade and Development. It was out of their agenda that the guts of the NIEO were crafted: subsidies and tariffs to grow national economies, cartels to protect prices of exported raw minerals, preferential financing to go around the prohibitive rates set by banks, and so on.

By the mid-1960s, NAM was challenged on its right and left flanks. From the right came NAM states that had formed close associations with imperialism, whether by joining the Manila or Baghdad 'security' pacts or by the formation in 1969 of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (led by Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Pakistan). These formations took a position against Third World-style socialism and communism. From the left came the Tricontinental, a group established by Cuba of state and national liberation movements that believed in a fuller freedom – often to be attained by armed struggle. The Tricontinental would not only gather heads of states, but leaders of national liberation movements from Cape Verde to Vietnam. At the 1966 Tricontinental Conference in Havana, Cuba's President Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, who had been present at the NAM's founding in Belgrade, was crisp in his denunciation of the mood and strategy of conciliation to imperialism – 'The problem of underdevelopment, even of independent nations, cannot be solved with palliatives, with institutions and technical instruments that emerge out of international conferences. The cause of underdevelopment is none other than the subsistence of imperialist domination, and thus it can be overcome only through a struggle against and by total victory against imperialism.' These were strong words. By the 1970 NAM meeting in Zambia and the 1973 NAM meeting in Algiers, the ethos of the Tricontinental would be centre stage.

Cuba's revolution of 1959 could not be contained. Everything that the new revolutionary government led by Fidel Castro did was rational and logical, from land reform to control of electricity and housing prices. Each time the government moved one of these reasonable policies, it was met by resistance from the local landowners, from the Cuban property owners, and from the US transnational firms. It was this resistance that proved the Marxist analysis of capitalism, that the social development of the people was constrained by the hideous prejudice of private property. It was not that Castro came to Havana as a Communist, but it was that the wretched resistance of the owners – whether in Cuba or in the United States – made him into a Communist. Castro challenged the transnational oil and electricity companies, and they fought back; but the new Cuban revolution was stubborn, so it took what it wanted. The US embargo and the turn to Communism was a consequence of the impossibility of the United States to tolerate a free country in the Caribbean. Haiti had suffered that fate after its revolution in 1791. Che Guevara was in Guatemala when Árbenz was overthrown; he knew not to trust the United States and he knew that the revolution had to arm the people and defend itself. Indio Naborí, a Communist poet, took the line from Louis XIV and gave it to the Cuban worker, *The state, now it is me* ('*el estado, ahoro soy yo*'); Castro quoted this line in a speech at a graduation ceremony in 1961, when three thousand children of peasants lined up to take their degrees – and claim the state as their own.

In 1966, Castro would welcome the national liberation movements to Havana. Between 1960 and 1965, the CIA had tried to assassinate Castro at least eight times (Castro told Senator George McGovern in 1975 that the actual number by then was 24). Even the CIA acknowledged to the Church Committee in 1975, that it had at least twice sent mafia gangsters with

poison pills, poison pens, and deadly bacterial powders to kill Castro in those years; the mobsters failed. In 1961, the CIA attempted an invasion of Cuba at Bay of Pigs. This failed because Castro armed the people. And then he turned to the world of national liberation as well as the socialist bloc to provide a shield.

In 1966, Che Guevara was on a secret mission in Tanzania to assist the resistance movement in the Congo. Che was disappointed. 'The human element failed,' he wrote in his Congo Diary. 'There is no will to fight. The leaders are corrupt. In a word, there was nothing to do.' He would draft two books on economics and philosophy before moving on to his tragic mission in Bolivia. All this was supported by the Cuban government. The export of the revolution, the Cuban leadership felt, was the essence of their revolution. At the Tricontinental conference in 1966, Castro announced that this new body would 'coordinate support for revolutionary wars of liberation throughout the colonized world'. Cuba would provide logistical support and people to all liberation movements 'within its means, wherever they occur'.

The imperative of armed struggle at the Tricontinental came fully developed from Amílcar Cabral of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), who argued that 'we are not going to eliminate imperialism by shouting insults against it. For us, the best or worst shout against imperialism, whatever its form, is to take up arms and fight'. Cabral picked up the gun not out of choice, but out of necessity. The PAIGC began its independence struggle in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde in 1956. Three years later, the Portuguese authorities conducted a massacre at Pijiguiti, killing 50 unarmed dockworkers. It was this colonial violence that pushed the PAIGC into the armed struggle that ran from 1961 to 1974. It was imperialism's harsh face that moved the national liberation struggles of the 1960s and the 1970s into the armed phase. It was the viciousness of

imperialism which denied the national aspirations of the people of places like Vietnam and the Congo that pushed them to move to the gun. An inventory of that colonial violence would include the Malayan Emergency (1948– 60), the Kenyan Emergency (1952–60), the French war on Algeria (1954–62), the French war on Vietnam (1946–54), the US war on Vietnam (1954–75), the failed 1961 US invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, the 1961 assassination of the Congo's Patrice Lumumba, the US invasion of Guatemala (1954) and the Dominican Republic (1965), and the massacre of the Communists in Indonesia (1965). In the lead-up to the Tricontinental, in October 1965 French intelligence and Moroccan intelligence assassinated Mehdi Ben Barka, one of the planners of the Tricontinental. What different kind of futures might have been available to the Congo and to Morocco had the Congolese National Movement and the National Union of Popular Forces in Morocco been able to triumph? Such different futures buried with the corpses of those who had been assassinated. It was this colonial violence that set the tactical terms for the armies of national liberation that came to Havana in 1966. They did not want violence; violence was imposed upon them.

The violence of the armies of national liberation was, as Amílcar Cabral put it, 'to answer the criminal violence of the agents of imperialism. Nobody can doubt that, whatever its local characteristics, imperialist domination implies a state of permanent violence against the nationalist forces'. Violence is the essence of imperialism and it is the instinct of a cornered imperialist bloc. It was this violence that was on display in the Vietnamese village of Mỹ Lai in March 1968. One soldier described his mission with brutal honesty – 'Our mission was not to win terrain or seize positions, but simply to kill: to kill Communists and to kill as many of them as possible. Stack 'em like cordwood.' Four years later, in 1972, Portuguese colonial troops went into

the village of Wiriyamu in Mozambique and massacred between 150 and 300 villagers. Before they killed them, the Portuguese colonial troops made the villagers clap their hands and say goodbye.

By 1975, the Vietnamese had defeated the US, and Portugal was defeated by its African colonies. Cuba remained afloat, despite every attempt to overthrow that government. No question that the Carnation Revolution of Portugal would not have taken place to overthrow the Estado Novo in 1974 without the wars of national liberation in Angola, Cape Verde, and Mozambique. No question that two decades later the apartheid regime of South Africa would not have fallen without the victory of the Angolan liberation forces, with the Cubans against the South African regime in the 1987–88 battle of Cuito Cuanavale. Democracy in Portugal and in South Africa was taken by the gun. It was not given by liberalism. This narrative is now submerged. It has to be revived. Not just the sounds of the battlefield, but also the stories of the doctors and the technicians, of the revolutionary educational programmes in Mozambique and Cape Verde, the attempt to build a new society out of the detritus of the colonial order. This was the revolutionary energy that is now forgotten.

It was not forgotten due to the passage of time. A condition of amnesia was produced by the corporate media and the profession of history-writing, both of whom became stenographers of power. There was concerted effort by the West to undermine the entire dynamic of decolonization, from coups against the Ghanaian people (1966) to coups against the Chilean people (1973). Violence of the colonizer was slowly justified in humanitarian terms, with the West re-establishing itself as the architect of humanity who would now need to manage the violence of the native. The great decolonization process – whose highpoint was in the 1960s and 1970s – became the prelude to poverty and war that now racks the former Third World. Beneath the

paving stones in these colonized lands there is no beach. Beneath the paving stones, the corpses of freedom fighters.

EXPOSE THE US 'UNNECESSARILY'

The anti-colonial movement had, by the late 1950s, delegitimized the idea of colonialism. National liberation leaders – even when they had different political orientations – fought to build united platforms on the world stage to oppose both colonialism and imperialism. The most important institution for them was the United Nations, which they saw as an instrument for the decolonization struggle. In 1960, these states pushed for that important resolution at the UN that summarized their views: 'the process of liberation is irresistible'. Even if the French tried to hold on to Algeria and the British tried to hold on to Rhodesia, the process of liberation could not be stopped.

The United States has always hesitated before admitting its own colonial history. There is a great myth of the American Revolution of 1776 as an anti-colonial revolution. It is worth asking if 1776 was a revolution at all. There was no class struggle of any importance, no movement from below of the workers that defined the revolutionary process, no social unity of the various peoples (Europeans, Africans, Native Americans) in this struggle. Instead, there was a genocidal attitude towards the Native peoples, and a great fear of a revolt of the enslaved Africans. The war against the English was premised against a desire by the European settlers to break out of the Thirteen Colonies and conquer the entire continent; this was a war for colonization, not a war against colonialism. When the break with England did happen, no real change took place in the order of property, with the contradiction between Southern plantation capitalists and Northern

industrial capitalists put off for a few generations till the Civil War broke out in 1861.

From its early years, the new country looked outwards to conquer, with one Kentucky man saying in 1810 that 'his countrymen were full of enterprise' and 'although not poor, are greedy after plunder as ever the old Romans were. Mexico glitters in our eyes – the word is all we wait for'. They did not have to wait long. President James Polk sent the US troops south to claim Mexico. The *New York Herald* on 8 October 1847 cheered the soldiers on:

> It is a gorgeous prospect, this annexation of all Mexico. It was more desirable that she should come to us voluntarily; but as we shall have no peace until she is annexed, let it come, even though force be necessary at first to bring her. Like the Sabine virgins, she will soon learn to love her ravishers.

Mexico lost one-third of its territory, including what would become the US states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah. Earlier, the United States had gone into the 1812 war against the British to seize Canada; some hoped to go to war against the Spanish for Cuba and Florida; yet others called for the genocide of the Native Americans so that the settlers could have the entire continent for themselves ('you are a subdued people', the US government told Native chiefs as early as 1784). US imperialism was born not in the harbours of Havana and Manila in 1898, but on the vast territory that would eventually stretch from New York to San Francisco. But this 'internal colonization', with its full-scale genocide of the Native peoples, did not fully appear to be colonialism since it was muddied by conceptual blankets such as 'territorial expansion' and the 'frontier of settlement'.

In 1823, James Monroe delivered an important speech which laid out the Monroe Doctrine. In his speech, Monroe made it abundantly clear that the United States of America was supreme in the hemisphere of the Americas. At the same time, Monroe told the Europeans both that they must not interfere politically and commercially in the hemisphere, and that the US is perfectly within its rights to interfere in Europe (the issue here was Greek independence). In 1893, just before the US went to war against Spain to expand its colonies, Frederick Jackson Turner in his celebrated speech on the frontier found the 'germ of the Monroe doctrine' in the colonial tendencies of the farmers of the Ohio Valley, whose wars against the Native Americans and whose drive to California and the purchase of Louisiana defines the beginning 'of the definite independence of the United States from the state system of the Old World, the beginning, in fact, of its career as a world power'. Or, to be frank, of an imperialist state.

Even the US role in the 'Spanish-American' war is shrouded in the falsehood that the US sent its troops in 1898 into Cuba, Guam, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Samoa to help liberate these lands from the Spanish empire. In fact, the US absorbed these countries into its orbit, forcibly defeating the national liberation forces in each of these places. Cuba's revolutionaries were denied a role at the peace talks in Paris, and US General William Shafter did not allow General Calixto García to attend the Spanish surrender in Cuba. This was symbolic of the usurpation of the gains of that war by the United States. None of these former Spanish colonies were allowed to become independent; they were hastily absorbed into the expanding archipelago of US power.

Rudyard Kipling wrote his poem *White Man's Burden* (1899) to urge on the United States to take up its imperialist mantle. It is a silly poem. It misunderstood the US posture. It was not as if the US would not be an

imperialist power, since it was already one in many of its aspects and would become one in the decades to come. What Kipling did not recognize was that the main political leaders in the United States masked their imperialism by various forms of anti-imperialism. Albert Beveridge, the US Senator for Indiana, wrote a tract with just this theme – *For the Greater Republic, Not for Imperialism* (1899). 'Imperialism is not the word for our vast work,' Beveridge wrote, because imperialism came with all the suggestions of domination and theft. What imperialism truly represents, he continued, is the 'mighty movement and mission of our race'. What was that mission? Kipling wore that mask tighter than Beveridge. In his poem, he defined imperialism or the white man's burden as 'to seek another's profit, to work another's gain'. The imperialist did not act to aggrandize himself, to steal wealth; he worked to bring civilization to the barbarians. This was an old trick – the mission of civilization as the objective of imperialism, when it was clear from all evidence that the objective was to plunder wealth and subordinate sovereignty. Beveridge won his seat to the Senate with an impassioned speech that called for outright colonization of Cuba, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. 'The trade of these islands,' he said, 'developed as we will develop it by developing their resources, monopolized as we will monopolize it, will set every reaper in this republic singing, every spindle whirling, every furnace sprouting the flames of industry.' These were honest words – annexation to subordinate these islands so that they provided raw materials for US industry, and then bought the finished products from the United States.

Anxiety about being an imperialist power runs through the entire history of Washington's expansion. Nitze, who framed the policy of preponderant power for the United States, wrote in 1955 that support for colonialism was 'abhorrent to American sensibilities'. But this did not mean

that Nitze supported the decolonization process that would include the meeting of the African and Asian states at Bandung that year. He understood, as the UN would say in 1961, that the process of decolonization was inevitable. But its timing could be slowed. There was a taste of Hegel in Nitze's essay, the acknowledgment that the 'historic development of world forces' would lead to decolonization and that the US should throw 'its weight behind the acceleration of self-determination for all peoples'. But then came the caveat. The US should throw its weight but only 'under conditions which will see preserved these precious freedoms'. Here's an important hesitation. Only if the new states would drive in the lanes drawn by the US – who would determine what are these 'precious freedoms' – could they be allowed eventually to flourish. The language of freedom and liberty would fly off the lips of US diplomats, but the meaning of these words would be unique.

In 1962, the administration of US President John F. Kennedy produced an Overseas Internal Defense Policy document. It is a clear statement of the class allegiance of the United States with the worst elements of countries in the Third World – despite the glamour of the Kennedy administration and its veneer of liberalism. This Policy document was being prepared by Kennedy's team just as 6,500 US Marines landed in Thailand to 'support that country during the threat of Communist pressure from outside', and just as Kennedy – after his failed attempt to overthrow the government in Cuba – pledged to 'go all the way' against Vietnam's Communist government. This 1962 document merely established in print what had already been written in blood: that the full force of the United States would be used to make sure that 'developing nations evolve in a way that affords a congenial world environment for international cooperation and the growth of free institutions'. All this is verbiage for a simple motto: the US government will

make the world safe for the capitalist system whose major beneficiaries were transnational corporations (most of them based in the West). In fact, there is no need to annotate the Policy document. The US, the authors write, has an 'economic interest in assuring that the resources and markets of the less developed world remain available to us and to other Free World countries'.

Those Marines arrived in Thailand in July 1962. They had come to bolster the anti-Communist militias and the Thai police – both trained by the CIA – in a war to weaken the communist Pathet Lao forces in nearby Laos and the Communist Party of Thailand, which began armed struggle in 1961. The US sent in its premier former CIA diplomat John Peurifoy, fresh from overthrowing a democratic government in Guatemala, to oversee operations in Thailand, and to ensure that the military – led by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat – came to power. Millions of dollars flowed out of the Kennedy administration to train the Thai Army and the Royal Lao Army in a project known as Ekarad. Theirs was a policy – as the US embassy in Bangkok put it – of 'covert harassment'. It is what created the conditions for a clash with the Pathet Lao, the triggering of the SEATO pact, and then the arrival of US troops – with the sound of US aircraft overhead, threatening the wrath of napalm. Garment workers from factories that ringed Bangkok and college students moved in a radical direction; they, along with the insurgency at the fringes of the country, threatened the monarchy, the military, and the bourgeoisie. It was to crush them that the US lent its full force, in return for which it got a subordinated ally and military bases – and it could ensure its economic interests remained alive and well.

The intervention of the US Marines – little known now as it was little discussed then – took place alongside the 'covert harassment' provided by droves of US advisors to the Thai and Laotian military forces. The US whispered into the ears of the militaries of these regions, who were quite

pleased to suspend any talk of democracy in the interests of stability; stability is a synonym for anti-Communism. These militaries were not simply marionettes of US power; they represented classes in their own societies that wanted to suppress workers and peasants to maintain both local oligarchic rule – from which they benefited – and international imperialism – from which the US and its allies benefited.

What was impossible was for the United States to admit that it was an imperialist power. The times were against that. In January 1962, Kennedy asked the CIA Deputy Director for Plans Richard Bissell to oversee the Special Group (Counter-Insurgency). It was this group that produced the Overseas Internal Defense Policy document. Bissell was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in the home that was built by Mark Twain, one of the leaders of the Anti-Imperialist League that was set up to protest the US war on the Philippines. Bissell went to Yale, and then the CIA; the men who joined him in this Group were also well-read men from Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. They knew both their history and their current events. The countries of the Third World had just met in September 1961 in Belgrade (Yugoslavia) to set up the Non-Aligned Movement. That is why the Special Group emphasized covertness in its operations. US power must be used through military action (asymmetrical wars), but also through the use of measures such as economic inducements, sanctions, and information warfare as well as support for local police and military forces (hybrid wars).

'It is important,' Bissell and his colleagues wrote, 'for the US to remain in the background, and where possible, to limit its support to training, advice, and material, lest it prejudice the local government effort and expose the US unnecessarily to charges of intervention and colonialism.'

PART 2

MANUAL FOR REGIME CHANGE

Jacobo Árbenz came to power in 1951 in impoverished Guatemala with a democratic mission. He wanted to make sure that the peasantry held land and could use that land to free themselves. Árbenz came from a wealthy family, which encouraged him to join the military. It was as a military officer that Árbenz saw the US-backed dictator Jorge Ubico crush peasants and force them to work for the massive US-owned United Fruit Company, the largest single landowner in Guatemala. Árbenz was influenced by the Communist leader José Manuel Fortuny and by his feminist and socialist wife María Vilanova. When he won the election in 1950, he pledged to use the land to help the people. But there were only four Communists in the 61-member congress and none in Árbenz's cabinet. Their influence on the process would be exaggerated.

The Agrarian Reform pushed by Árbenz was modest for such a grotesquely unequal society. In 1953, Árbenz's government expropriated 200,000 acres of unused lands owned by United Fruit. The company, based in New Orleans (Louisiana), would not tolerate this action. Nor did the US government, whose members had intimate financial links to United Fruit. US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's law firm – Sullivan & Cromwell – represented United Fruit. Dulles, his brother Allen (the CIA director), John Moors Cabot (Dulles's Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs), and Thomas Dudley Cabot (Dulles's Director of International Security Affairs) were some of the largest shareholders in United Fruit. The former CIA director Walter Bedell Smith became president of United Fruit after the removal of Árbenz. US President Dwight Eisenhower's personal secretary – Ann Whitman – was the wife of Edmund Whitman, the

publicity director of United Fruit. Their action was not merely on behalf of US imperialism or of the capitalist class; it was also for themselves.

'If the Guatemalans want to handle a Guatemalan company roughly,' the First Secretary at the US embassy in Guatemala City wrote to Washington in 1951, 'that is none of our business, but if they handle an American company roughly it is our business.'

The CIA developed a covert programme called PBFORTUNE to overthrow Árbenz. There was nastiness from the start. General James Doolittle wrote to his old army buddy US President Dwight Eisenhower that the CIA needed to operate viciously. 'There are no rules in such a game,' he wrote. 'Hitherto acceptable norms of human conduct do not apply.'

Árbenz was overthrown in 1954. His ouster seemed to follow from a manual, which would then be used over and over again, from the removal of João Goulart of Brazil in 1964 and of Salvador Allende of Chile in 1973, from the overthrow of Abd al-Karim Qasim of Iraq in 1963 to Sukarno of Indonesia in 1965, from the ouster of Patrice Lumumba of the Congo in 1961 to Juan José Torres of Bolivia in 1971. There are echoes here of the method used to overthrow the government of Evo Morales of Bolivia in 2019 and the ongoing attempt to overthrow the Bolivarian process in Venezuela. Anyone who pushed an agenda that resembled economic nationalism, anything that threatened the market domination of transnational corporations and that offered an advantage to the Communists had to be removed. International law and public opinion could be massaged to the advantage of imperialism. The formula is clichéd. It is commonplace, a short plan to produce a coup climate, to create a world under the heel. Here are the nine chapters in this manual for regime change.

1. Lobby 'public' opinion

A coup has to be first prepared in public opinion.

Journalists who looked at what Árbenz was doing would have reasonably concluded that he was merely following through on the promises he had made in the campaign. They would have reported that Árbenz had not threatened to overthrow the United Fruit Company, only to take away some of its lands to enhance the conditions of the Guatemalan people. But such reasonableness was not possible.

United Fruit hired Edward Bernays, a leading public relations expert, to lobby the US Congress about a Communist conspiracy. 'Whenever you read "United Fruit" in Communist propaganda,' wrote the firm's public relations director, 'you may readily substitute "United States".' The point, for Bernays, was to ensure that United Fruit and United States were synonymous and that any attack on the company should be seen as an attack on the country. Bernays used United Fruit money to send journalists from the *Chicago Tribune*, *Newsweek*, *New York Times*, and *Time* to report on Communists in Guatemala. The journalists complied. In an unsigned report in the *New York Times* on 14 July 1951, the journalist wrote, 'We cannot expect a Maya, living in an ancestral village high in the hills, unable to read, cut off from the main world currents, to recognize communism by instinct as just another system of slavery.' The journalist had talked to no one in the highlands, quoted no one – this was a press release from United Fruit.

United Fruit spent half a million dollars to lobby the US Congress, using these accounts of a Communist threat in Guatemala. 'Public' opinion, namely, the views of the capitalist media and the US Congress had been won over to the side of United Fruit.

The US government had stopped supplying arms to Guatemala, so Árbenz bought some Czech weapons. When these were delivered, Washington exaggerated their impact to the stenographers of the Western media houses. John Foster Dulles went to Caracas for the 10th Inter-American Conference to push for a resolution that condemned 'communist infiltration' with an emphasis on Guatemala. All the oligarchies lined up behind Dulles; only Guatemala voted against the resolution. The public relations campaign had succeeded in isolating Árbenz and the land reform agenda.

Red Rule in Guatemala, screamed an NBC television broadcast. No more needed to be said. The fate of Árbenz was sealed.

2. Appoint the right man on the ground

Much work needed to be done within Guatemala. The right man had to be in charge. The US State Department sent along John Peurifoy as Ambassador to Guatemala City, who came from Athens where he had played a key role in strengthening the new anti-Communist government. Washington had a stable of men like Peurifoy. In Brazil, the man on the ground was Lincoln Gordon – a liberal when it suited him, but a ruthless anti-Communist outside the United States. It was Gordon who called upon the US government to send a 'clandestine delivery of arms' to the Brazilian coup makers. For the coup against Allende in Chile it was Nathaniel Davis, for the coup against Sukarno in Indonesia it was Marshall Green. In Iran, it was Loy Henderson, who went and threatened Mossadegh with the withdrawal of US support and forced his resignation. These men helped stiffen the spine of the Western embassies, ensured that propaganda was ready to justify the coup, and provided sufficient US backing for the murders

and mayhem that would follow. Green, for instance, met with the Western ambassadors after it became clear that the Indonesian generals wanted to move. The Army, he told Washington and his fellow ambassadors, 'hoped for Western sympathy and economic help if Army decide to depose Sukarno'. The embassies were only too willing to help. They provided lists of Communists and Communist sympathizers who needed to be killed.

Peurifoy was good at his job. When the CIA plots failed, as they often do, and when the agents are discovered and arrested, as often happens, it is the US Ambassador who has to hold his nerve and continue to pressure the government. Peurifoy never lost his composure; he tried to bribe Árbenz with $2 million, then threatened him, then began to make links with his cabinet, and finally sat in the embassy on 18 June 1954 and watched as his plot worked to overthrow the government.

There is that old joke. Why is there never a coup in the United States? Because there is no US embassy there.

3. Make sure the Generals are ready

Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, who worked as a furniture salesman in Honduras, was convinced by the US that he needed to return home as the liberator of his country. Castillo Armas was known to have been cultivated by United Fruit, which was said to have paid him $30,000 per month as a retainer. Colonel Roberto Barrios Peña, one of the key opposition military men, complained to the US on 8 October 1953 that Castillo Armas was unreliable and would not help unify the fragmented opposition. The CIA knew that Castillo Armas was useless; he had blocked a coup attempt in January 1952 and was not getting along with the other military officers who were eager to defend United Fruit against the Guatemalan people. But he

was loyal. Castillo Armas was backed not only by United Fruit, but also by the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, whose intervention would be invaluable.

After Árbenz's second expropriation of land on 12 August 1953, the CIA's Operations Coordinating Board told the CIA to go ahead 'on a basis of high priority' against Árbenz. With $3 million in hand, the CIA went to work to train the mercenary force of Castillo Armas and to bring the entire military brass behind him. In December, US Ambassador Peurifoy wrote to John Cabot at the State Department (and a shareholder of United Fruit) that the US government 'must accept the risks inherent in helping to bring about a change of government here'. He said that the problem facing the United States and United Fruit was the disorganized opposition. 'The internal "anti-Communist" opposition,' he wrote, 'is badly divided and without a workable political program or an organization immediately available.' That is the reason why Peurifoy recommended the 'Guatemalan Armed Forces as the primary area in which any effort to stimulate anti-government action is most likely to be fruitful'. CIA asset Henry Hecksher, who worked undercover as a coffee buyer in Guatemala, approached Colonel Hernán Monzón Aguirre, who was not only in Árbenz's cabinet but was also influential in the army. Hecksher offered Monzón a bribe to join the coup. Monzón would become the leader of the Junta that took over immediately after Árbenz was ejected; he would then pass the baton to the CIA's favoured Castillo Armas. Hecksher, meanwhile, would be promoted to Chief of the CIA Station in Laos in 1958, then as part of the CIA operation in Indonesia from 1960 to 1963, before moving to Mexico City where he ran the project against the Cuban Revolution, before rounding out his career as the CIA Station Chief in Chile in 1973 to overthrow Salvador Allende.

Peurifoy's 28 December 1953 cable to Washington makes two points that are worth reading in full:

> What I expect is that the program outlined in the telegram would (a) prepare hemispheric and Guatemalan opinion for a change and dull the charges of intervention which may be expected to be leveled at us, and (b) to [*sic*] create here a climate in which important segments of the population and especially the Armed Forces and propertied class felt their interests sufficiently threatened to be stirred from their present lethargy into a better disposition to take the risks necessary to cooperate actively in bringing a new government into power.

4. Make the economy scream

On 11 September 1953, the CIA produced a report on its hybrid war against Guatemala. Down the list of points, it noted that 'economic pressure' was essential; 'Considering that Guatemalan government economy is susceptible to pressures, covert economic warfare methods targeted against oil supplies, shipping and vital exports and imports, where feasible, will be applied'. A working group was formed that comprised US businessmen with 'experience in Latin American banking, shipping, publicity, general investments and oil' and three men who 'occupy high positions in Guatemalan business and industrial life'. The CIA wanted to shift attention from United Fruit and towards Guatemala's coffee production. It produced a report on 31 July 1953 with the title 'The Coffee Industry in Guatemala – Special Considerations Regarding Possible Economic Sanctions'. US firms – such as Folgers and J.A. Medina – were concerned about any problems in the coffee export business. The CIA would have to mollify them. In its September report, the CIA noted that it needed to either use real or 'necessary fabricated evidence' at the

upcoming OAS conference for 'multilateral economic action against Guatemala, particularly in respect to coffee'. The CIA had developed a study on 'what phases of the coffee industry may be attacked which will damage the Árbenz government and its supporters without seriously affecting anti-Communist elements'.

Reading these CIA documents from 1953–54 brings to mind the US government's preparations for the 1973 coup against the socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile. On 15 September 1970, US President Richard Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger authorized the US government to do everything possible to undermine the incoming government of Allende. Nixon and Kissinger, according to the notes kept by CIA Director Richard Helms, wanted to 'make the economy scream' in Chile, and they were 'not concerned [about the] risks involved'. War was acceptable to them as long as Allende's government was removed from power. The CIA started Project FUBELT, with $10 million as a first instalment to begin the covert destabilization of the country. On 11 June 1971, US Treasury Secretary John Connally told Nixon, that 'the only pry we have on them, the only lever we have on them, it seems to me, is at least if we could shut off their credit, or shut off the markets for the commodities they produce, or something. But we have to be in a position to impose some economic sanctions on them. Now, you can't impose military sanctions, but we can impose financial or economic sanctions'. A month later, Allende nationalized the copper sector and told the main companies – Kennecott and Anaconda – that he would compensate them by forgiving the $774 million in excess profit taxes that they did not pay. Chileans celebrated this day as the Day of National Dignity (*Día de la Dignidad Nacional*). The companies went to the White House to complain. They were joined by the telecommunications giant ITT and the soft drink maker Pepsi Cola. On 5

October 1971, Connally told Nixon, 'The only thing you can ever hope is to have him [Allende] overthrown, and, in the meantime, you will make your point to prove, by your actions against him, what you want, that you are looking after American interests.'

The retaliation was swift. The US Export–Import Bank had already refused to give Chile a loan to buy three Boeing aircraft. This was less a loan to Chile and more a subsidy to Boeing – as the deposed Ghanaian prime minister Kwame Nkrumah wrote in 1965, 'Aid, therefore, to a neo-colonial state is merely a revolving credit, paid by the neo-colonial master, passing through the neo-colonial state and returning to the neo-colonial master in the form of increased profits.' When Chile went to the Paris Club to negotiate the terms to reschedule its $1.862 billion in debt, the US delegate at the Club sniffed. The US owned $1.227 billion of this debt, so it raised the issue of both compensation to the copper transnational firms and Chile's suspension of debt repayment. Pressure on Chile mounted, as international finance dried up. In the Inter-American Development Bank, the US holds 40 per cent of the votes and effectively runs a veto; its loans to Chile fell from $46 million in 1970 to $2 million in 1972. The World Bank, controlled by the US, made no new loans to Chile between 1970 and 1973. The Export–Import Bank reduced Chile's ratings from B to D – the lowest level. Trade continued, but firms began to ask for cash upfront for the purchase of goods. All this occurred as the copper prices fell by 25 per cent; as global inflation increased imported food prices rose. Inflation escalated to over 1,000 per cent, and the Allende government began to print money and to ration goods in order to prevent a total decline in living standards.

A combination of Nixon's 'invisible blockade', the panicked reaction to the sanctions by the government, and the adverse international conditions

(low copper prices, high food prices), 'created the conditions', as Kissinger put it, for a coup. Nixon answered, '[T]hat is the way it is going to be played.'

5. Diplomatic isolation

The government that stands against imperialism and stands with its people has to be portrayed as out of touch and isolated long before the tanks leave the barracks. This isolation has to appear as a natural process. No longer is the government a government, but a regime; no longer is it a democratic government, but an autocratic regime.

No one disagreed that Salvador Allende won the Chilean presidential election in 1970 in a fair vote. That was beside the point. The Chilean oligarchy and the US government had tried to undermine the Chilean democracy after the socialists began to make gains in the 1960s. The CIA ran a programme to influence Chilean mass media, with the suggestion that it was the Soviets – who had no real purchase in Chile – who wanted to undermine Chilean democracy. They funded the parties of the far right in the Chilean Congressional elections of March 1969. When this failed, and when it appeared that the socialists would win the 1970 presidential elections, the CIA attempted to create dissension, to split the socialist vote, and to ensure the victory of the far right. Allende won the election on 4 September 1970.

As early as 9 September that year, a full three years before the actual coup, the CIA opened a conversation with the Chilean military about a military coup. General René Schneider was not keen on a coup because he believed that the Constitution of 1925 had to be respected. Retired Army General Roberto Viaux, who was eager for a coup and had been regularly meeting the CIA, kidnapped General Schneider and killed him. This

shocked the army. It was the CIA, the right wing in the army, and the Chilean oligarchy that had tried to undermine democracy. They should have been the ones who were isolated. But that is not how the language of imperialism operates.

In 1962, the Organization of American States, under pressure from the US government, suspended Cuba from its ranks. Castro had called the OAS the 'Yankee Ministry of Colonies', which is – on balance – a fair portrayal. The OAS had been used by Washington to discipline the countries of the hemisphere, and so it had been used against Cuba right after Castro's government began to assert the rights of the Cuban people to its own land and labour. It was not enough to remove Cuba from the OAS. The Kennedy administration fought to have the OAS impose sanctions on Cuba in 1964, and it demanded that all OAS members follow suit. Mexico was the only OAS member that refused Kennedy's edict.

At its January 1962 meeting, the OAS said that 'Marxism-Leninism is incompatible with the Inter-American system and the alignment of such a government with the communist bloc breaks the unity and solidarity of the hemisphere'. The expulsion of Cuba came on the lines that communism was alien to the Americas. Allende knew this. That is why he did not declare his government to be based on Marxist principles and why he was careful not to openly make a connection with the Soviet Union. He did open full relations with Cuba, however, and trade relations with North Korea. Four other states followed Chile's lead regarding Cuba, breaking the OAS blockade; this is what the US wanted to forestall, and hence the CIA itched for a coup. 'It is likely,' the CIA noted in a long memorandum produced for Henry Kissinger on 4 December 1970 on the situation in Chile, that the 'Chileans will be more sophisticated than the Cubans', and so they will not provoke an OAS expulsion. The CIA drew up a plan to overcome the hesitancy of the OAS

members to directly challenge Chile's seat in the OAS. One way to force Chile's hand would be for the US to organize 'blanket and concerted opposition to Chilean positions and proposals, harassment and slow-down or suspension of IDB [Inter-American Development Bank] loans and OAS technical assistance'. Making Chile's rightful use of the OAS machinery difficult might force Allende's hand and then lead him into the trap set by the US – namely for expulsion from the OAS and diplomatic isolation.

When the OAS did not bow to US pressure, US Treasury Secretary John Connally proposed to US President Richard Nixon in 1971 that the US withdraw from the OAS and deal with each of the Latin American countries on a bilateral basis. In any bilateral conversation, the US would be the most powerful negotiator, and it could more easily isolate countries that did not submit to US pressure. If the US could negotiate with each country individually, Connally said, 'then we can put the screws on Peru and Brazil'. The OAS, for the US, was merely an instrument of power, not a platform to create regional cooperation. It would be naïve to read the OAS Charter and take it seriously.

It was not easy to eject Chile from the OAS, although sanctions did hit the economy. Western intelligence services worked hard to damage Allende's reputation on the world stage. What Allende was saying had resonance across the Third World. His speech at the UN in December 1972 depicted a world in struggle between the power of transnational corporations – backed by the United States and its allies – and sovereign states. This was the kind of language that resonated in the Non-Aligned Movement, whose principle objective in those years was for passage of the New International Economic Order, a complete overhaul of the trade and development system. Allende warned that the NIEO was not on the cards for the Western countries, and instead, 'the entire political structure of the world is being undermined'. This

was not hyperbole to him; this was a factual statement. When the NAM met in Algiers in September 1973, Allende was not there. India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said in her opening remarks on 6 September, 'We miss President Allende of Chile, who is fighting a battle which is common to us.' A battle *common to us*. The isolation could not work as long as the Third World bloc and the Soviet bloc remained intact. Nonetheless, five days later, on 11 September, the coup would take place and Allende would be dead.

When the shadow of the Third World and the Soviet bloc receded two decades later, it became much easier for the United States and its allies to use diplomatic isolation as a tool for regime change. It would become much easier for the Arab League to throw out Libya prior to the NATO war on that country in 2011; it would be infinitely easier to use the OAS as a weapon against Venezuela and Bolivia.

6. Organize mass protests

A coup is never a coup. To call it a coup would be to admit that the United States government had subverted the democratic processes of another country or at least to have interfered in another country. A coup had to come by another name. It had to be a popular uprising against an authoritarian government, which was saved by the intervention of the nationalist military. It could have been a 'takeover' or an 'interim step'. That had to be how the coup was understood.

Thanks to the CIA control of the media, the news reports in the major Western papers would not call it a coup, nor would they call it a war. Hanson Baldwin of the *New York Times* had offered John Foster Dulles total cooperation in his coverage of the 1953 CIA coup in Iran; he would do the same for Guatemala. 'The almost *opéra-bouffe* quality of the Guatemalan

“war” ’, wrote Baldwin on 22 June 1954, after the army had begun the massacre of those who followed Árbenz and of the Communists. This was, for Baldwin, ‘a war that so far is primarily without battles but is punctuated by pronouncements and rumors’. The word ‘coup’ does not appear, and ‘war’ comes in scare quotes.

To be a popular uprising, masses of people are needed on the streets. But if the masses are behind the government – as was the case with both Mossadegh and Árbenz – then how to fabricate the popular character? Money helps, and Kermit Roosevelt spread a million dollars around in Tehran in 1953 to gather up a ‘rented’ crowd. Peurifoy, along with his CIA colleague Howard Hunt, did the same in Guatemala City; when Árbenz and his family were leaving the country, a well-dressed crowd, funded by the CIA, stood near at hand, yelling abuse at the family, and then watching as the military forced Árbenz to strip naked before he could board the plane to Mexico.

Philip Agee at the CIA’s Montevideo station wrote in his diary on 1 April 1964 about what he was hearing from the CIA’s Rio station’s chief Ned Holman about the coup against Goulart in Brazil. It was the CIA’s station in Rio and its other offshoots that ‘were financing the mass urban demonstrations against the Goulart government, proving the old themes of God, country, family, and liberty to be effective as well’. William Doherty of a CIA front said of the coup in Brazil, ‘It was planned – and planned months in advance. Many of the trade union leaders – some of whom were actually trained in our institute – were involved in the revolution, and in the overthrow of the Goulart regime.’ CIA Director William Colby authorized at least $8 million to ‘rent’ crowds in Chile and to subsidize strikes. In February 1973, US Colonel Gerald Sills asked Chilean General Augusto Pinochet when he would move to overthrow the socialist president Allende.

'Not until our legs get wet,' Pinochet replied. 'The armed forces cannot move against Allende until the people get out into the streets and beg us to act.' The CIA went into motion. The money was spent on 'strikes' and on 'protests', which obliged Pinochet to send his troops out of the barracks. Without the 'demonstrations', there was no legitimacy for the army to act.

In Guatemala, the rented crowds plastered the capital with anti-Communist slogans and with threats to the lives of both Árbenz and Fortuny. The Guatemalan military officers were told by US military advisors that if they did not overthrow the government, the US would invade. It was a threat that unsettled many otherwise loyal officers; they would either stand down when the coup happened or join the coup itself.

The hot breath of the coup that blew over Guatemala lingered over the Caribbean and then swept towards British Guiana. There, in 1953, the people elected as their chief minister Cheddi Jagan, the leader of the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union as well as of the People's Progressive Party. Jagan was not a member of a Communist party, but he was a Marxist who came from Port Mourant – British Guiana's 'Little Moscow'. Winston Churchill, the prime minister of Britain, which was the colonial master of British Guiana, wanted Jagan overthrown. Jagan's new labour laws and his threat to move on a socialist agenda terrified Churchill. 'We ought to get American support in doing all that we can to break the communist teeth in British Guiana,' he wrote to Oliver Lyttelton, his Secretary of State for the Colonies. The US did not seem immediately interested; it was busy with Iran and Guatemala. Churchill sent in his troops to remove Jagan. It was a simple operation, and mass support was not necessary.

A decade later, Jagan was back in power, and this time the United States was interested in his removal. US President John F. Kennedy's advisor wrote

to him in August 1961 about the 'possibility of finding a substitute for Jagan himself', in other words, for regime change in Guyana. Jagan was very popular, and a simple military intervention seemed too difficult. This time the CIA decided to use the trade unions against Jagan. The CIA worked closely with the US trade-union movement – the AFL– CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, the largest federation of unions in the US) – to create a range of fronts, such as the Free Trade Union Institute and the American Institute for Free Labor Development. These fronts channelled US government money to trade unions across the world; their agents built up the right-wing unionists against the left. Their collaborators across the world were often people and organizations of the seediest interests – including people from the mafia and from fascistic groups. Anything was acceptable to undermine the class struggle, both inside Europe and in the national liberation states.

In 1947, during the strike wave in France, the right wing and the mafia went on a rampage against the workers. One of them – Vincent Voulant, a Communist militant – was killed by the Marseilles mafia, an early indication of the kind of alliances at work. Three of four workers in Marseilles went on strike during the day of his funeral. Dockworkers joined miners to shut down the city. They threatened a Communist insurrection in the southern region of France. The CIA's Frank Wisner met with the Free Trade Union Committee's Jay Lovestone (a former US Communist Party leader), who then began to courier cash to the anti-Communist trade union Force Ouvrière and to Le Milieu (the mafia), but more precisely the Corsican front. The deal was that the mafia would intimidate the union members and murder Communists, while in exchange the French and US authorities would allow them to bring heroin into Europe. This was known as the French Connection. Additionally, the CIA sent a psychological operations

unit to undermine the reputation of the Communists. When a ship arrived with 60,000 sacks of flour and when the dockers refused to unload it, the CIA spread the story that the unions and the Communists were against the hungry.

It was these 'free labour' groups funded by the US that began to create mischief amongst the working class in British Guiana. They funded and disaggregated the trade-union movement. This is how the CIA brought the 'masses' to turn against the left governments. American Federation of Labor's Serafino Romualdi was in Guiana in 1951, where he had begun to set the roots for what would come a decade later. In 1962, eight trade-union officials from Guiana came to a training course run by the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). They returned to Guiana charged up against Jagan's government, which came to power in September 1961. In 1963, these men and their unions organized a general strike that lasted for three months and deeply damaged Jagan's government. The unions could hold out because they received funds from two AFL–CIO unions. These were the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees and the Retail Clerks International Union. These CIA funds came to the AFL–CIO from private foundations such as the Gotham Foundation (created by the CIA). The CIA had its fingers all over a series of labour fronts, such as the international department of the Public Services International Union (whose main person William Howard McCabe was a CIA agent) and the labour lawyer of the AFL–CIO Gerald O'Keefe (also reportedly a CIA agent). O'Keefe is said to have provided funds to Richard Ishmael, a labour leader who opposed Jagan, and to Forbes Burnham, Jagan's main political opponent, to hire men to conduct acts of violence and sabotage against the government and its supporters. The intimacy of the CIA

and the AFL–CIO was such that after this Operation Flypast, J.C. Stackpoole of the British Foreign Office began to call them the AFL– *CIA*.

Jagan's government fell, and then – deeply damaged – lost the elections in 1964. Burnham, who won, would rule Guyana with US support till 1980, while his party stayed in office till 1992.

While they created confusion in Guyana, Romualdi and his AFL– CIA team brought their mischief to the Dominican Republic. Juan Bosch, a socialist, won the presidential election in 1962 and attempted to move a modest agrarian agenda. But what Bosch found soon enough was that all the main mass organizations in his country had been either fronts of the CIA or had been hollowed out by the AFL–CIA. One of his close advisors – Sacha Volman – was a CIA asset who hollowed out the main peasant organization (Federación Nacional de Hermandades Campesinas, FENHERCA), while the AFL–CIA had created and shaped the main trade union, Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Libres (CONATRAL). Bosch's bureaucrats and technicians had been trained by the International Institute for Labor Studies, which was funded by the Inter-American Center for Social Studies, which in turn received money from a CIA front known as the J.M. Kaplan Fund. Bosch stood on hollow ground. When Bosch had to go, the AFL–CIA tugged on the strings, the workers were sent on strike, and Bosch had to concede to what appeared to be mass unrest against his government.

7. Green light

There is always a green light. These documents come to us fifty years after the fact, a cunning statement of power once the world has been changed. It is one thing to wink and acknowledge a role in a coup from another

generation; it is always to be hidden when the *Manual for Regime Change* is actively in use.

11 July 1953: 'Through legal, or quasi-legal, methods to effect the fall of the Mossadeq government, and to replace it with a pro-Western government under the Shah's leadership with Zahedi as its Prime Minister.'

26 August 1960: 'In high quarters here it is the clear-cut conclusion that if Lumumba continues to hold high office, the inevitable result will at least be chaos and at worst pave the way to communist takeover of the Congo. His removal must be an urgent and prime objective. This should be a high priority of our covert action.'

When the light flashed green, the CIA pilots got into their P-47 Thunderbolts and began to fly over Guatemala City. They fired their .50-calibre guns and dropped some five-pound fragmentation bombs; they made a racket.

No coup is as easy as it seems. Castillo Armas's ill-armed battalions failed in their rush to the capital. Many suffered defeats at the hands of the border guards and the army. The CIA aircraft bombed an oil tank, which – one CIA agent wrote – left an impression of 'incredible weakness, lack of decision, fainthearted effort' amongst the coup makers. But the Army feared a US invasion. One of Árbenz's men went to a base, where he found the officers hiding in their barracks. They think, he told Árbenz, 'that the Americans are threatening Guatemala just because of you and your Communist friends. If you don't resign, the Army will march on the capital and depose you'. The CIA did not know that the Army had turned. They authorized a massive bombing of the country, and a barrage of radio broadcasts. But the Army seized power, and turned its back on the CIA. 'We have been betrayed,' said US Ambassador Peurifoy. But Peurifoy knew his

job. He barked at the Army and they conceded. In 11 days, five successive juntas took power, each more willing to subordinate itself to Washington than the previous one.

8. A Study of Assassination

Fortuny, the leader of the Guatemalan Communist Party, took refuge in the Mexican embassy. He was asked if the overthrow of Árbenz meant that the US would not allow a Communist government in the Americas. 'Draw your own conclusions,' he said. He died in Mexico City at the age of 89 in 2005.

The CIA had long believed that if it could assassinate key leaders, it would weaken the resolve of any national liberation state. One CIA official wrote, in the context of Guatemala, that 'the elimination of those in high positions' in the government 'would bring about its collapse'. The CIA's Directorate of Plans got its hands on a 1949 list of the left drawn up by the Guatemalan military. 'Disposal lists' of people to execute were circulated; peasant and worker leaders, Communists, Marxist intellectuals – all of them were on these lists. In January 1952, the CIA had its list of 'topflight Communists whom the new government would desire to eliminate immediately in event of successful anti-Communist coups'. In a cable on 29 January 1952, the CIA asked for the following: 'HQ desires list [of] communists and/or sympathizers whom new government would desire encarcerated [*sic*] immediately in event of successful anti-communist coup. Request you verify following list and recommend additions or deletions.' When I read the word 'encarcerated', I read it as incinerated not incarcerated. Both words apply. Weapons were delivered to the hard-right Guatemalans, and sabotage operations began against the Árbenz government. As part of its psychological warfare, the CIA sent leading

Communists 'death notice' cards each day for a month in 1953. The CIA created a new programme – PBSUCCESS – to 'remove covertly, and without bloodshed if possible, the menace of the present Communist-controlled government in Guatemala'. Assassination teams – the K Group – and sabotage groups began their work.

In the CIA files on Guatemala is a chilling 19-page document with a simple title, *A Study of Assassination* (1953). 'No assassination instructions should ever be written or recorded,' says this *Study*. Decisions must be made in the field and kept there. There is a list of tools that can be used in an assassination, from hammers to kitchen knives, 'anything hard, heavy, and handy will suffice'. 'Absolute reliability is obtained by severing the spinal cord in the cervical region,' which can be done by a knife. 'Persons who are squeamish should not attempt it,' says the *Study*. Such studies would continue to be produced for the military and paramilitaries associated with the long arm of US imperialism. In 1983, the Honduran military officers read the *Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual*, which was less explicit about murder but as clear about the use of force to get the desired results – namely to crush the class struggle. Battalion 316 of the Honduran military made it its business to pick up anyone from the left, torture them, and then murder those hundreds that it deemed too dangerous to release into society. The CIA teachers were excellent at their jobs. Dan Mitrione of the CIA went to Uruguay, where he taught the right-wing groups how to use torture. 'The precise pain, in the precise place, in the precise amount, for the desired effect' – that was his credo. His favourite torture was to electrocute the genitals. He was killed by the left-wing Tupamaros in 1970.

The most stunning account of politicide in terms of numbers is clearly the massacre of the left and left sympathizers in Indonesia that took place in a short span of time from October 1965. North of Indonesia, the Vietnamese

people continued to defend themselves from the US bomb; their resilience was clear to the CIA, which noted in October, 'Hanoi continues to assert its determination to press on with the war in South Vietnam despite the continuing attrition of the air war and the increase of US troops in the South.' In March 1965, 3,500 US Marines landed in Vietnam; they were the first of hundreds of thousands of combat troops. The US had begun to escalate there, having frozen the war in Korea. That same month, a decade after the stalemate between the two Koreas, Kim Il Sung (leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) met with a Chinese delegation. He told them something which worried the CIA. 'If war breaks out in Korea in the future, we would still need your help and would want to fight together. Comrade Mao Zedong once said that China's Northeast is our rear area and that, furthermore, all of China is our rear area.' China had just tested its nuclear bomb in 1964 and would eventually extend its nuclear shield over Korea. The US attitude had been made clear by President Lyndon B. Johnson. In a speech that year, he said to the Communists, 'We must say in Southeast Asia as we did in Europe, in the words of the Bible: Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.' The 'no further' applied not only to Southeast Asia, but to anywhere outside the USSR, China, the northern halves of Korea and Vietnam.

It certainly applied to Indonesia, which had the largest Communist Party outside China; the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) had an important relationship with President Sukarno who had begun to edge closer and closer to the Communists. In 1965, one section of the Indonesian Army moved against Sukarno, and took over the institutions of the country. Then began what is generally understood to be one of the ghastliest political purges in modern times. The Indonesian Army and its allies – mainly fanatical anti-Communists, including religious groups – killed at least a

million people in this pogrom. What is beyond doubt – even though the US refuses to release fully its documents on this period – is that the United States and the Australians provided the Indonesian armed forces with lists of Communists who were to be assassinated, that they egged on the Army to conduct these massacres, and that they covered up this absolute atrocity.

What cables have been released from the United States show that the US embassy in Jakarta knew full well what was going on. 'A reliable Balinese source informed the Embassy,' the Political Affairs Counsellor wrote on 21 December 1965, three months into the killings, 'that PKI deaths on the island of Bali now total about 10,000 and include the parents and even distant relatives of crypto-Communist Governor Sutedja.' The reference here is to Anak Agung Bagus Suteja, born into a royal family, who had participated in the anti-Japanese and anti-Dutch struggles and had been imprisoned by the Dutch from 1948 to 1949. After independence in 1949, Suteja was appointed to run the administration on the island of Bali. Not only did the Army kill his extended family, but he was also 'disappeared'. CIA officer Edward Masters sent a cable in 1966, which read, 'Many provinces appear to be successfully meeting this problem of executing their prisoners or killing them before they are captured.' He referred to the Communist prisoners. The US had provided the Indonesian Army with a list of at least 5,000 Communist leaders. The Australians also had their list. In early October 1965, Australia's Ambassador Keith Shann wrote to say that the massacre of the Communists is 'now or never' and that he 'devotedly' hoped that the Army would 'act firmly' against the Communists. He need not have worried. By 1966, Australia's Prime Minister Harold Holt told a New York audience, 'With 500,000 to one million Communist sympathizers knocked off, I think it is safe to assume a reorientation has taken place.'

Whether in Guatemala or in Indonesia, or by the 1967 Phoenix Program (or Chiến dịch Phụng Hoàng) in South Vietnam, the US government and its allies egged on local oligarchs and their friends in the armed forces to completely decimate the Left. The Phoenix Program in South Vietnam ran from 1967 to 1971. A CIA memorandum from 1968 ('Assessment of the Phoenix Program') clearly says that one of the three goals is 'to neutralize 12,000 VCI members'; VCI stands for the Viet Cong infrastructure. In this assessment, the CIA notes that they believe that there are roughly 82,000 cadre of the Vietnamese national liberation movement in the South; of these, in 1968, the US and its South Vietnamese allies were only able to kill 11,066 with 83.5 per cent of them 'serving at village or hamlet level'. The US wanted to kill more advanced cadres, so 'US officials developed a listing of VCI executive and significant cadre' who were to be assassinated (or in the CIA language, neutralized).

In South America, the US government worked with the archipelago of military juntas from Argentina to Paraguay to abduct, torture, and murder Communists in the continent. This programme, which ran from 1975 to 1989, was called Operation Condor. It would kill around 100,000 people and imprison half a million. In a 1977 CIA document called 'Counter-terrorism in the Southern Cone', the official notes that Operation Condor consists of CIA oversight of the Chilean development of a computerized data bank ('all members will contribute information of known or suspected terrorists'), and Brazilian provision of gear for 'Condortel' (the group's communications network). The Condor assassination teams were primed against known Communists, opposition leaders, and human rights groups (including members of Amnesty International). Condor's agents operated in Europe to kill Communists, and it killed former Chilean Ambassador to the US Orlando Letelier and his associate Ronni Karpen Moffitt in Washington, DC

in 1976. It has long been thought that the CIA was involved in this murder. The Argentinian armed forces, meanwhile, sent a hastily-written note of concern to the US government that the investigation into the murder of Letelier might lead to information about the 1974 assassination of the former Chilean Minister of Defence General Carlos Prats and his wife Sofía Cuthbert; the Argentine cable makes it clear that General Prats, a close associate of Salvador Allende, had been killed as part of Condor ('Measures must be taken to conceal any ultimate Argentine responsibility in the Prats case since').

For just about four days in 1971, a Communist coup in Sudan led by Major Hashem al-Atta could have changed the balance of forces in Africa, but it was soon overrun by Colonel Gaafar Nimeiry, the deposed President, who used the counter-coup as an opportunity to arrest and assassinate the main leadership of the Sudan Communist Party – including the founder of the party Abdel Khaliq Mahjub – and of the trade unions.

This was the formula used in Argentina and in Chile, in Brazil and in Iraq, and in Ghana – a ruthlessness was let loose upon the earth, as the most toxic political ideologies were given full license to kill. And then, on their radio and television stations, in their newspapers and magazines, the United States and its allies would either suffocate the truth or else frame the story so that the Communists essentially killed themselves.

9. Deny

When Árbenz was ejected, and when the Communists were murdered, the US government denied any role. Privately, they were thrilled. CIA Director Allen Dulles wrote to the US Ambassador to Honduras Whiting Willauer about the coup, which he called a revolution. Later, Willauer described the

telegram from Dulles, saying, 'In effect the revolution could not have succeeded but for what I did.' The US government masked its activities, including denying requests by journalists through the 1966 Freedom of Information Act. No documents were released until the USSR collapsed. Denial of the documents came alongside ongoing encouragement, participation, and complicity by the US government in the massacres conducted by the Guatemalan army against any dissent. The US State Department's Viron Vaky wrote in an internal memorandum in March 1968 that the violence sanctioned and conducted by the CIA in Guatemala presents 'a serious problem for the US in terms of our image in Latin America and the credibility of what we say we stand for'.

What we say we stand for – the sourness of the hypocrisy in Vaky's phrasing.

If the mechanics of the coup were to be released as it happened or just after it happened, it would not only be denied but the person who made the accusations would be branded as a conspiracy theorist.

In 1967, the CIA produced a dispatch (1035-960) called 'Concerning Criticism of the Warren Report'. Four years previously, a commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren produced a report on the assassination of US President John F. Kennedy. The CIA worried that interpretation of the largely inchoate Warren report was undermining the 'whole reputation of the American government'. The CIA was eager to disparage those who asked serious questions about the activities of the US government. To discredit criticism, the CIA suggested that its agents contact liberal critics of the agency and 'point out . . . that parts of the conspiracy talk appear to be deliberately generated by Communist propagandists. Urge them to use their influence to discourage unfounded and irresponsible speculation'.

The idea of the 'conspiracy theory' was developed by the anti-Communist philosopher Karl Popper in his 1945 *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Popper was against the view that war, unemployment, and poverty were the 'result of direct design by some powerful individuals and groups'. Theories of society – such as Marxism – which attempted to understand the social mechanisms of war and unemployment could be softly dismissed as merely conspiracy theories. Popper pointed out that conspiratorial groups were paranoid and – like Nazism – would lead to totalitarianism and genocidal policies. Popper's liberals viewed any left-wing criticism of the US state and society as conspiratorial; the actual conspiracy theorists – such as Joe McCarthy and the John Birch Society – were sniffed at, disparaged, but not taken seriously (after all, as Daniel Bell wrote, the Communists – unlike the John Birch Society – had a conspiracy that 'was a threat to any democratic society'). This was not a principled objection to conspiracies, but a class attack on any criticism of capitalism and imperialism.

The idea of the conspiracy theory was used to delegitimize genuine investigation of covert behaviour by the government. Implicit faith in the goodness of US power generated the view that the US government would never use illegal means to secure its ends, and that if there was any suggestion that the US had fomented a coup – that suggestion was dismissed as a conspiracy theory.

Those who suggested that the US participated in a conspiracy against the Árbenz government would be roundly mocked as conspiracy theorists. Later, when the documents proved that the critics had been correct it was too late.

PRODUCTION OF AMNESIA

The United States had to be discrete. But it was not enough to conduct its activities in secret. It had to both deny its role as the leader of the imperialist bloc, and it had to reveal this role so as to engender fear amongst its adversaries. Bissell and his colleagues in Special Group (Counter-Insurgency) said that the US must 'remain in the background'; but, later US President Richard Nixon told his Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman that he favoured the 'Madman Theory . . . I want the North Vietnamese to believe I've reached the point where I might do anything to stop the war . . . he has his hand on the nuclear button'. Homeopathic doses of fear for US power had to come alongside allopathic doses of amnesia about US power.

Free. Freedom. It was a public relations coup for these words to be associated with the West, and to paint the USSR and its allies, as well as the newly independent post-colonial states, as dictatorial and authoritarian. The idea of the 'free world' was produced not by reality – namely, that the US and its allies were truly free or were committed to basic liberal principles – but it was produced by a massive project that involved money and talent, the construction of institutions and organizations as well as a cultural imagination. The West became associated with the idea of Freedom through propaganda.

The idea of the 'free world' was mobilized to produce implicit faith in the United States, and to delegitimize both the socialist world and the Third World project. Money poured into the media and into other culture industries to portray people like Stalin and Nasser as the equivalents of Hitler. These men were depicted as the essence of evil, and their projects as against freedom. What freedom meant was not the freedom to be fully alive – to have the resources to eat, to learn, to be healthy – but to have free elections and a free press; although even this entire definition had the ring of falsity, as the people of France, Greece, and Italy had experienced in the near

aftermath of the Second World War, and as the people of the Third World found as the imperialist powers asserted their right to reclaim their lost colonies. The French, as an example, prosecuted their rights over Algeria and Vietnam in the name of democracy, against authoritarianism, just as the United States intervened regularly in the Americas on behalf of old encrusted oligarchies in the name of anti-communism and anti-totalitarianism. It did not seem relevant that French colonialism was itself totalitarian – as Hồ Chí Minh had been saying since the 1920s – and that US intervention in the Americas itself strengthened totalitarian rule, including military rule. These assaults against democracy were conducted in the name of freedom, a freedom for the oligarchs and imperialism against the people. If the United States or the French or the British intervened into countries of the Third World, this was for freedom; the Soviets and the Third World project were the essence of unfreedom: this was a remarkable feat of interpretation.

To assert such an interpretation, a peculiar version of history had to be secured. The past had to be smothered, amnesia produced, and room for discussion of the actual history had to be erased.

Smartly, the CIA and its various offshoots as well as private foundations (such as the Ford Foundation) did not feel the need to finance right-wing and oligarchic intellectuals and social movements. These were already committed to the rule of the oligarchy and imperialism, and they got sufficient funds from private sources. It was more important to strengthen the spine of the liberals and of the anti-Communist left. In 1950, the US government created the Congress for Cultural Freedom to promote anti-communist views among left-leaning intellectuals across the world; at the same time, US foundations such as the Ford Foundation flooded intellectual communities and social movements with large fellowships and grants. Their

goal was to produce an anti-Marxist and anti-communist mentality, even at the cost of rationality. The CIA and the Ford Foundation had an intimate relationship; when it was revealed in 1967 that the CIA had funded the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the platform was given to the Ford Foundation which renamed it as the International Association for Cultural Freedom. The CIA–Ford money grew tentacles deep into the Third World intelligentsia through magazines such as *Black Orpheus* (Nigeria), *Hiwar* (Lebanon), *Mundo Nuevo* (Paris), *Quest* (India), and *Transition* (Uganda). These periodicals, well-funded conferences, book ventures, and films became the avenue to promote anti-Marxist and anti-national-liberation ideologies, including the promotion of the primacy of religion over reason.

The opportunistic use of religion as the bulwark against communism was a feature of both the CIA and the Ford Foundation. The CIA nudged Saudi Arabia to create the Muslim World League in 1962 as a way to organize people in the Third World on the basis of religion, and to suggest the dangerous foreignness of communism, left-wing nationalism, trade unionism and even anti-clericalism. 'Everywhere the newly independent countries seem to be putting great emphasis on a revival of their religion as a means of strengthening their cultural independence and their national patriotism,' noted Don Price of the Ford Foundation in January 1955 – months before the Bandung Conference. 'The religious traditions in Asia,' Price wrote to his boss, 'may be a bulwark against Communism.' Price acknowledged that religion must be 'a handicap to the Asian nations' own efforts to modernize themselves in technical and economic and administrative ways', but this was a price worth paying. Backwardness was better than communism, and backwardness could be sold ideologically as authentic to the cultural world of Asia. It was communism that was foreign; backwardness was indigenous.

‘BE A PATRIOT, KILL A PRIEST’

On 5 March 1971, Nixon assembled his closest advisors to the Oval Office. They were talking about Latin America. Nixon pointed out that the single most important event in the past ten years was the ‘deterioration of the attitude of the Catholic Church’. ‘[T]hey’re about one-third Marxists, and the other third are in the center, and the other third are Catholics . . . In the old days,’ he said, ‘you could count on the Catholic Church for many things to play an effective role.’ Not anymore, not after the Second Vatican Council of 1962 and the emergence of liberation theology. Several key Catholic priests had come to the understanding that Jesus was a revolutionary, and so they should stand with the peasants and workers against the oligarchs and the armies. Since the Church had provided the ideological and cultural scaffolding to prevent the growth of radical ideas, the drift of some priests towards the left raised serious concerns not only amongst the oligarchies and the militaries, but also in the Vatican’s upper echelon and in the United States government.

The CIA had close ties with the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, whose members run across the Catholic fraternity and who have a strong hold on churches across the world. When the Nazi leadership fled Europe in 1945, the Vatican’s Bishop Alois Hudal worked closely with this Order to smuggle them to South America. Klaus Barbie went on this passage to Bolivia, where he became a senior intelligence asset for General Hugo Banzer. In 1948, the Order honoured Reinhard Gehlen, the CIA’s Nazi who later became the head of West German intelligence. The CIA funded Catholic Action, a lay group with ties to the Order but even more with the far-right fascistic elements who helped prevent the Communist election victory in Italy and who would provide intelligence against any left-leaning

priest. The infrastructure for the weaponization of religion against the left was produced in the aftermath of the Second World War with an unsavoury group of far-right fascists, actual Nazis, CIA agents, oligarchs who wanted no change to their wealth, and sections of the Church.

In 1975, not long after Nixon's ruminations about Catholicism, Bolivia's Hugo Banzer, with advice from his Nazi security chief Klaus Barbie, urged his Interior Ministry to draw up a plan against liberation theology. Banzer's Interior Ministry was stuffed with fascists from Bolivia's Falange movement; for several years, before he attempted a coup against Banzer, the Ministry was run by the fascistic Colonel Andrés Selich Chop, whose unit executed Che Guevara in 1967. In 1975, the Ministry was run by Juan Pereda Asbún, who would follow Banzer onto the dictator's chair. Pereda worked closely with the CIA to draw up what would be known as the 'Banzer Plan', which was a direct attack on liberation theology. Bolivian intelligence, joined by the CIA and by the intelligence services of ten other Latin American countries, began to compile dossiers on liberation theologists, to plant Communist literature in the churches to shut down any progressive Church publication, and to arrest and expel foreign priests and nuns who believed in liberation theology. On 16 July 1975, the Bolivian intelligence services arrested three Spanish nuns in the town of Oruro, accused them of conspiring with labour unions to hold a strike, and then deported them. Such arrests and deportation became commonplace; the Vatican did nothing to defend its priests and nuns. The CIA financed fascistic religious groups that would then bomb churches and assault priests and nuns affiliated with liberation theology.

The violence would escalate to murder. In El Salvador, where priests and nuns took up residence in the slums, the fascistic religious paramilitaries circulated a simple call – *haz patria, mata un cura* ('be a patriot, kill a

priest'). Rutilio Grande, a Jesuit priest, was murdered by the Salvadoran security forces in 1977 in a spate of murders which would culminate in the killing by a far-right death squad of the Archbishop of San Salvador Oscar Romero in March 1980. In December of 1980, four nuns from the United States were abducted, raped, and murdered by members of El Salvador's National Guard. It would not end there. In 1989, six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter were brutally killed by a Salvadoran army battalion that had been trained by the United States. Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo, as general secretary of the Latin American Episcopal Conference, would leave his church and go into the forests of Colombia with the paramilitaries; he was known to point out radical priests and nuns, who would be executed. López Trujillo would later head the Vatican's campaign against homosexuality. In 1979, he organized a conference of Latin American Bishops, where Pope John Paul II said that the 'idea of Christ as a political figure, a revolutionary, as the subversive of Nazareth, does not tally with the Church's catechesis'.

Within a decade, Nixon's worries about liberation theology morphed into two documents prepared for Ronald Reagan's administration; these documents by a group that called itself the Council for Inter-American Security are known as the *Santa Fe Document* 1 (1980) and 2 (1984). They suggested that war, not peace, is the norm in world affairs; they said that the main battlefields for the war against communism were to be in South America and Southeast Asia. The main point was that the United States must protect 'the independent nations of Latin America from communist conquest' and 'preserve the Hispanic American culture from sterilized communist conquest'. The first document said that priests affiliated with liberation theology 'use the church as a political arm against private property and productive capitalism'. The next document noted that the US

government must make closer ties with the Catholic hierarchy to crush liberation theology. In 1983, Pope John Paul II went to Nicaragua, in the throes of its revolution, to attack priests and the flock for their attraction to liberation theology.

Not only had the Vatican been seized by the threat from liberation theology, but Catholics seemed to drift off towards evangelical churches – many of them financed by US evangelical projects, especially Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network. The larger evangelical churches – especially many of the neo-Pentecostal churches – had been immune to the drift leftwards. They were as reliable as the Opus Dei and Catholic Action tendencies. General Efraín Ríos Montt of Guatemala despised Catholic priests who went into the slums and consorted with Communists. Protestant sects, particularly those with US roots, he felt, preached the Gospel of individual enterprise not social justice. That is why Ríos Montt left the Catholics and joined the Gospel Outreach Church of Eureka (California). When Ríos Montt came to power in a military coup in 1982, Pat Robertson dashed down to Guatemala City to interview him for *The 700 Club*; Robertson portrayed Ríos Montt to his more than three million viewers as having 'a deep faith in Jesus Christ'. This is Ríos Montt, who not only let loose his army to conduct a genocide of his own people, but who said, '[I]f you are with us, we'll feed you; if not, we'll kill you.' A decade before, leaders of 32 Pentecostal churches in Chile welcomed Pinochet's coup. They said that the overthrow of Allende 'was God's answer to the prayers of all the believers who recognized that Marxism was the expression of a satanic power of darkness. We, the evangelicals, recognize as the higher authority of our country the military junta who in answer to our prayers freed us from Marxism'.

Religion, as Don Price of the Ford Foundation wrote from Burma, was the bulwark against Communism.

THE ANSWER TO COMMUNISM LAY IN THE HOPE OF MUSLIM REVIVAL

In August 1951, a curious document arrived in Washington from Taipei with the title 'Proposal to Unite Democratic Nations and Islamic World into an Anti-Communist Force'. The memorandum was forwarded to Washington by Colonel David Barrett, a career US soldier who was the military attaché to the Nationalist government in Taiwan. It was written by Haji Yousuf Chang, who would later become a scholar of Islam in China and would establish in 1976 the Islamic Education Cultural Foundation in Taiwan. Chang noted that there were three ideological frameworks that contended with each other in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War – Democracy, Communism, and Islamism. Democracy and Communism were currently in the midst of a dangerous war in Korea, not far from Barrett. Islamism, meanwhile, could be found from the Suez Canal to Sumatra. Islam, he thought, could either ally with the forces of democracy or of communism, which is why the United States had to hastily suborn Islam to its anti-Communist mission. In February 1951, John Playfair Price, a British diplomat who had most recently served as Consul-General for the British in Khorasan, Sistan, and Persian Baluchistan (in the outer rim of Iran), said,

> The answer to Communism lay in the hope of Muslim revival in which Pakistan was well qualified to assume leadership. Persia may well prove to be the bridge for Muslim unity. The Muslim world is a reservoir of

strength. Communism can be checked by a faith stronger than its own and that faith lies in the Middle Near East.

This statement impacted Chang. He proposed that the US government fund a three-point plan:

1. To set up an Islamic Cultural Society in the place chosen as the centre of the Muslim movement, a channel keeping close contact with the Muslims in the world, especially those in Middle East and China.
2. To publish periodical pamphlets in English, Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, and Malayan languages, with the purpose of linking up the Americans and Muslims together into one united front against Communism.
3. Both the cultural society and the office issuing the pamphlets should be headed by Muslims either from China or any other Muslim countries. It is of the utmost importance that it should not be made known to outsiders that such services are backed by the United States.

This was the essence of Chang's memorandum. Barrett's note affixed to the memorandum applauded Chang and suggested that he be hired to implement the policy.

Two years later, in Iran, the CIA operated alongside Ayatollah Abol-Ghasem Kashani against the growing influence and power of the communist Tudeh Party. Kashani was a complex character, who – in 1951 – had defended the Tudeh 'as a loyal Muslim organization' and fantasized about a new 'anti-imperialist organization'; but after a trip to Mecca, he returned to Iran convinced that he should help overthrow Mossadegh and replace him with General Fazlollah Zahedi. When William Warne of the US Technical Cooperation Administration Mission went to visit Kashani in Tehran in August 1952, the cleric told him that what drove the people to communism

was misery and desperation. Communism, he told Warne, 'was the worst enemy of Iran and that to stop communism the present deplorable condition of the people should be improved. A hungry person will not go after moral values and religion'. More investment and infrastructural development by the United States were necessary, as was the removal of the Communists from the country. Later that year in November, US Ambassador to Iran Loy Henderson went to see Kashani, who told him that the 'situation made it all the more important that Christian US cooperate with Moslem Iran to prevent spread of militant atheism'. During the day of the coup against Mossadegh, Kashani's forces were out on the streets; they felt that their day of deliverance had come.

Kashani was eager to create a pan-Islamic movement, but he was not able to succeed in his mission. In 1949, King Abdullah of Jordan, the Shah of Iran, the King of Iraq, and the President of Turkey considered the establishment of a pan-Islamic movement. They shared an antipathy to the rise of anti-colonial nationalism and communism. A British Foreign Office official wrote in October 1949, 'In so far as a modern Pan Islamic movement is designed to create a common front against Communism, it is evident that we should do everything in our power to assist it.' No such divides of Shia and Sunni, Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi held this movement back. That it did not happen was merely from lack of will.

A decade later, the Saudis took leadership to form such a movement. On 18 May 1962, King Saud inaugurated an Islamic conference in Mecca, which brought together clerics and scholars from Algeria to the Philippines. That afternoon, the delegates formed the Muslim World League (*Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami*). This platform, funded by Petro-dollars and encouraged by the CIA, posed as a philanthropic organization when in fact it was a network to preach the gospel of Islam over communism and to create cells to influence

young people against both anti-colonial nationalism and communism across the Soviet lands and the Third World. David Long, a US official, said of this development, 'Pan-Islam was not, to us, seen as a strategic threat. There were bad guys doing bad things to people on the Left, to Nasser. They were fighting the pinkos. So, we didn't see pan-Islam as a threat.' After King Saud abdicated on behalf of Crown Prince Faisal, the latter went off on a world tour to promote the pan-Islamic alliance. Since the Rabitat was a 'civil society' network, King Faisal invited governments to come to Jeddah in 1969 to create the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), an inter-state body. Saudi Arabia financed Said Ramadan's Islamic Centre of Geneva so as to bring the Muslim Brotherhood into this pan-Islamic alliance against the left. In place now was an inter-state organization (OIC), a civil society organization (Muslim World League), and an intellectual institution (Islamic Centre of Geneva). The money came from oil; the direction came from the CIA.

Saudi money flooded parts of the world where in societies with large numbers of Muslims communism or anti-colonial nationalism had taken hold and where heterodox forms of Islam were prevalent. Mosques were built, clerics influenced, aid to the poor provided, books and pamphlets distributed amongst the youth – a new kind of belligerent, orthodox Islam seeded what would later emerge in force against socialism and against the modern world. The 'Muslim revival' that Haji Yousuf Chang had written about in his 1951 memorandum was now being prepared by the monarchies of the Arab world and the CIA.

'I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO MAKE THIS A TURNING POINT'

If you were standing on the edge of a cliff on 31 December 1979 and looking backwards over the decade that was coming to a close, the situation in the world would have given you whiplash.

There were immense advances for the people of the world during the past ten years, with vast areas of the world liberated from colonial rule and from colonial wars. In 1974–75, the people under Portuguese colonialism were able to remove the claws of Europe's oldest colonial power; Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, and Mozambique had fought against the Portuguese for decades, and now not only did they win their freedom – but through the Carnation Revolution – their parting gift to Portugal was the end of its fascist regime. The impact of freedom for Portugal's colonies in Africa was immediately felt in Rhodesia, where the national liberation fighters were strengthened to overthrow the government of Ian Smith and proclaim a free Zimbabwe in 1980. In 1975, the Vietnamese people watched as US imperialists boarded their helicopters on the roof of the US Embassy in Saigon, and thereby surrendered to the Vietnamese revolution. The US bombardment of Vietnam with Agent Orange and Napalm left the country's soil infused with toxic materials for generations to come; its loss of life demolished an easy transition to socialism. Vietnam won the war but was left a graveyard of possibilities.

Three rapid revolutions took place once more in poor countries, each one a result of deprivation of the most drastic sort and of the belief that the oligarchies would not be able to change the situation: Afghanistan (1978), Nicaragua (1979), and Grenada (1979). None of these revolutions would be allowed to stabilize and to put the various socialist agendas into place. Before the People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan could even set a course out of the deep inequality and backwardness, particularly in the rural and mountainous areas, the United States went to work with its most

diabolical allies to undermine an internally divided Communist movement. The US mined Managua harbour in Nicaragua and set in motion a series of dirty wars not only against the Sandinista government in that country but also against any progressive force that emerged in El Salvador and Guatemala. Finally, the US played upon the petty grievances inside the New Jewel movement in Grenada, watched as Maurice Bishop was executed by his former comrades, and then invaded the country to dismantle anything decent produced by the movement.

Part of what would be visible from the mountaintop were the coups – Bangladesh (1975), Chad (1975, 1978), Pakistan (1977), Iraq (1978), South Korea (1979), and Turkey (1980). Wrapped up in these coups is the story of a region, the entire arc of Asia that runs from Turkey to South Korea. These are coups with internal histories, so that the coup in Turkey is partly about the contest between the secular bourgeoisie of Istanbul and its Kemalist military against the Islamist petty bourgeoisie of Anatolia and its many religious orders; and so that the coup in South Korea, which first takes place in 1961, has to do with both the demands of the Cold War to retain South Korea as a US ally and the imperatives of the South Korean capitalist class which wanted to hold down labour so as to grow the economy at a rate that relied upon the extreme exploitation of the South Korean working class. Around the deeply local situation of the coups was a regional anxiety of the US imperialists about an increase in the influence of the USSR and China around not only Asia but also Eurasia. It is important to put in this context the new relationship between the US and China forged in 1972, to weaken fatally any attempt to create a united Communist front in the continent.

On 2 January 1980, US President Carter's Assistant for National Security – Zbigniew Brzezinski – wrote a memorandum to the President about the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan. The main argument of the

memorandum was to 'make the costs to the Soviets very high, preventing a successful Soviet consolidation of power there if possible'. To do this, the US would need to 'build a security system in the Persian Gulf'. 'I strongly urge you to make this a turning point,' Brzezinski wrote to Carter. Control by the United States in the region had begun to falter after the Communist Saur Revolution in Afghanistan in April 1978. Even though that revolution was internally driven, with minimal Soviet participation, the US saw it as an extension of Soviet power. Brzezinski had already pushed for US intervention in Afghanistan through the provision of funds and weaponry to the far-right *mujahideen* through the military government in Pakistan (formed out of the coup of 1977, fully backed by Washington). But now he wanted more. There were four elements to the Brzezinski plan, each of them eventually adopted by the US:

1. *A direct offer of large military assistance to Pakistan.* When General Zia-ul-Haq seized power in September 1977, he called the US Ambassador Arthur Hummel to inform him about what he had done. The US already knew and backed Zia fully. When the Soviets entered Afghanistan, Zia took out his prayer mat and prayed; he knew that US funds would now flood his country, which would – like Honduras in the Dirty War of the 1980s – become effectively a military base for US policy in the region.
2. *Speed up our acquisition of bases and a new unified military structure for the region.* The US Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force had been created in reaction to the Iranian Revolution of 1979. It was the military component of the Carter Doctrine (1980), which said that any threat to the Persian Gulf – mainly Saudi Arabia – would be seen as a threat to the United States; any attack on the Persian Gulf would be defended by this Task Force. In 1983, this Task Force became US Central Command.

3. *Covert action in South Yemen and Eritrea as well as in Iran and Afghanistan.* The CIA and US military intelligence began to operate against the People's Democratic Republic of Southern Yemen, which was governed by the Marxist National Liberation Front from 1969, and had drastically improved the conditions of its people (including land reform and equal rights for women); this government had to be undermined. In 1970, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, a Marxist group with mass support, emerged to take the upper hand in the fight for independence from Ethiopia; the US operated to beat back that dynamic and prevent the creation of a socialist republic in the Horn of Africa. US covert operations continued against Iran, and of course had begun against Afghanistan from the first hours of the Saur Revolution. People such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a fundamentalist who threw acid on the faces of female students at Kabul University, would become the main recipients of CIA funds through Operation Cyclone – a CIA programme to finance and arm the *mujahideen*, fighters for God, against the Afghan government. It was this programme that created the chaos that provoked the Afghan government to seek help from the Soviet Union. 'We didn't push the Russians to intervene,' Brzezinski later said, 'but we knowingly increased the probability that they would.' Or, as the CIA Chief of the Directorate of Operations for the region Chuck Cogan told me years later in a restaurant near Harvard University, 'We funded the worst fellows right from the start, long before the Iranian Revolution and long before the Soviet invasion.'

4. *An aid package to Turkey (funded largely by Bonn and perhaps other European allies) in exchange for Turkish help in Iran and Pakistan.* Powerful working-class movements swept across Turkey in the 1970s, with the threat looming of the possibility of the country joining the

revolutionary wave that had swept Asia. The US wanted to do anything and everything to forestall the possibility of a revolution: its arms embargo – put in place when Turkey occupied Northern Cyprus – ended in 1979 and by March 1980, the US and Turkey signed an economic and defence treaty. Sixteen NATO bases inside Turkey and the half a million troops of the Turkish army were on the line; they had to be protected. IMF austerity exacerbated problems in the country, which is why the US government advised the World Bank and the Irving Trust Company to provide loans to the otherwise bankrupt Turkey. NATO commander General Bernard Rogers, a US Army General, visited Ankara four times in October 1980, while General David Jones, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs, visited the country in November. Turkish Air Force General Ali Tahsin Şahinkaya went to Washington to – as they say – seek permission to move against the chaos in Turkey. A bright green light flashed from Washington for the Turkish military to seize power on 12 September 1980 (a CIA document was less clear, saying that the US military was 'alerted in advance of the military takeover'). General Kenan Evren took power, putting in place Turgut Özal as Deputy Prime Minister to hold the IMF line, sending in tanks to crush working-class rebellion, and hastening a NATO– Turkish military exercise called Anvil Express to show NATO support for the coup. The Turkish intelligence services (MIT), the CIA, and the fascist MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) had already spent the time since 1978 killing Communists; this exacerbated in the months after the coup. Turkey was prepared to become a military agent for US imperialism against the spread of the revolutionary wave. 'Turkey was not like Argentina,' Brzezinski told Özal, since it was more fortunate with its military leadership. They could be relied upon to toe the US line fully.

In these four points, Brzezinski did not mention South Korea. But, in a visit to South Korea in November 1980, Brzezinski said that US–South Korean relations must be 'viewed against the background of what has been happening in Europe and the Persian Gulf'. 'Afghanistan and Iran are no longer buffer states in the Middle East,' he told Kim Kyong Won, the South Korean Secretary General for the President. The military dictatorship of an increasingly 'isolated' Park Chung Hee that ran from 1961 to his assassination by his own intelligence chief in October 1979 could have led – thanks to already militant working-class and student unrest – into a broad revolution. This is what Kim told Brzezinski. The matter was settled with another military coup led by young officers, in particular General Chun Doo Hwan, who eventually became the coup's president. Chun's maniacal anti-communism, grounded in the anti-Communist National Security Act of 1948 and institutionalized in the police and internal security, led to the arrest and torture of hundreds of activists. It, said Kim, is what prevented South Korea from becoming 'another Iran'.

What is important here is that Brzezinski was talking to Kim in November 1980. In May of that year, in the southern city of Gwangju, a popular uprising fought against the Chun dictatorship. Chun sent in the military on 18 May, who opened fire and killed hundreds – if not thousands – of people. Chun defended his action saying that he was preventing a Communist coup, instigated by North Korea. On 23 May, at the CIA headquarters, a discussion took place where Richard Lehman – head of the National Intelligence Council – affirmed that 'there are no signs of anything untoward underway in North Korea'; he meant that North Korea was not behind the uprising. US Ambassador William Gleysteen wrote to Washington in May that the Gwangju uprising was an 'internal threat', with 'at least' 150,000 people involved. None of this impacted Washington, where

– on 30 May – a meeting at the White House concluded that 'the first priority is the restoration of order in Kwangju by the Korean authorities with the minimum use of force necessary without laying the seeds for wide disorders later'. The US government had counselled moderation, 'but have not ruled out the use of force, should the Koreans need to employ it to restore order'. In clearer terms, the US told Chun's government that it was permitted to use force.

In 1997, President Chun was sentenced to death – later commuted – for his role in the Gwangju massacre; the United States was not part of the proceedings, although the US green light should very well have been investigated (only in 2018 was it revealed that South Korea used US provided helicopters – MD 500 Defender and UH-1 Iroquois – in the massacre; arms sales to South Korea continued undaunted after 1980). The US government had no real problem with the crackdown in South Korea. Far better to let the South Korean military use lethal force than tolerate 'another Iran'; far better to maintain South Korea as a forward base for the ambitions of US imperialism.

'THE SHEET IS TOO SHORT'

The Third World Project, backed by the USSR, had placed on the table the idea of the New International Economic Order in 1973–74. The NIEO made the case for a total transformation of the trade and development order, drawing in the principles of economic nationalism onto the world stage. The United States and its allies understood the dangerous implications of the NIEO and found many ways to undermine its advancement – including the delegitimization of the United Nations General Assembly, which had endorsed the NIEO in 1974. The main argument against the NIEO was not

intellectual, but political, with the Western bloc using the full force of its power to contain any Third World infection inside the multilateral organizations and to pressure states reliant upon external funding to reject the NIEO programme. It was in this period that the US and its allies put pressure on the International Monetary Fund, and on the various private and public lending agencies, to tie loans of all kinds – even for short-term liquidity challenges – to structural adjustment of their own internal economies.

If these three initials – CIA – had become associated with US imperialism in the period from its formation to the 1970s, three new initials – IMF – became associated with Washington from the 1970s onwards. The IMF's manuals did not come with titles such as *A Study of Assassination*, but their policies had as harmful impacts – often via their own version of coups. For the IMF coup, the military did not need to leave the barracks; an IMF team would appear in the capital and subordinate the financial power of the state with few key demands about the price of currency and cuts in the budget. Two significant assaults – in the nature of financial coups – took place in Zaire (Congo) and Peru. In Zaire, IMF officials told the government through 1976 to 1978 to devalue the currency by 42 per cent, which led to a five-fold increase in consumer prices and a drop in real consumption expenditures by one-third. IMF officials essentially took command of the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank. In 1977, the IMF arrived in Lima with a proposal from a Citibank-led consortium to the dictatorial regime led by General Francisco Morales-Bermúdez Cerruti and his military junta; the consortium would offer to sell Peru's natural resources and take care of Peru's substantial debt. Billions would eventually flood out of the country. The word *desgobierno* – or ungovernment – would be coined to define the situation in Peru; it is a word that could be used for the other states that were

members of the Non-Aligned Movement and faced the IMF coup. Mexico's José López Portillo's government of 1976–82 made the same sort of deal with the IMF, fell into ungovernment, called out the riot police, and then plunged into bankruptcy in 1982. Washington kept its power dry; the IMF had done the job.

If the IMF dithered, the CIA made sure to stiffen its spine. In an important note from 1985 entitled *Major Debtors: Problems with the IMF*, the CIA noted that its economists faced the ongoing financial crisis in Mexico with far too much leniency. President Miguel de la Madrid, who adopted the IMF suggestions to slice deeply into the Mexican budgets, nonetheless worried that his austerity programme was alienating the population. He was, the CIA noted, 'resisting suggestions from within the government to make deep federal spending cuts and hold the line on wages'. Non-compliance by Mexico with IMF rules would pose 'the most immediate problem for US interests', the CIA wrote. The problem was not with Mexico alone, but with the region. If the IMF allowed Mexico latitude, then this would 'make it more difficult to negotiate meaningful reform with Brazil and Argentina'.

Around the time that the CIA delivered its assessment on de la Madrid, it wrote up a memorandum on the incoming Peruvian government of the socialist leader Alan García. García, the CIA noted, had already made comments in favour of the Nicaraguan revolution, and was thought to be close to the Soviets and the Cubans. The anti-IMF rhetoric of García was necessary in a country where IMF policy led to harsh austerity. He had made strong speeches against the IMF and called upon Latin American leaders to come to Peru and sign a Lima Declaration asking the IMF for more favourable payment terms. It was this regional solidarity that was the problem. The US government put pressure on private financial lenders to

cease their lines of credit to Peru. Hyper-inflation escalated, at unbelievable rates of 13,000 per cent per year. García lost his footing. He was booed when he left office; he was succeeded by Alberto Fujimori, whose own adherence to the IMF line – supported by the CIA and the rest of the Washington government – was called Fujishock. Fujimori adopted wholesale the prescription for the 'Washington Consensus' developed by the IMF's John Williamson in 1989 – from fiscal policy discipline to tax reform to privatization to deregulation. This list – later called liberalization or the policy slate of neoliberalism – would become formulaic for the IMF coups to come.

In April 1983, in an important summary entitled *IMF-led Austerity: Implications for Troubled Borrowers*, the CIA pointed out that the IMF policies were necessary, but they would create 'political instability'. 'Widespread anger and frustration with austerity will almost certainly spark periodic strikes, worker demonstrations, and possibly food riots.' Workers' strikes from Bolivia to Zambia threatened to go out of control. 'In our opinion,' wrote the CIA analysts, 'political resistance to austerity in debtor countries will build over time and become better organized. We believe strong political opposition will develop if the adjustment process is perceived as unfair or too harsh. Although at this time, we do not foresee a full-scale revolution or an outright repudiation of debt in the major debtor countries.'

Two years later, in 1985, the Cuban government tried to organize the discontent into this outright repudiation of debt. The Cubans hosted the Havana Debt Conference that year. The gathering took place in the shadow of the Guantanamo Naval Base that has been held by the United States since 1898. The novelist Gabriel García Márquez was at the conference, where he – like Castro – sat and took notes. A journalist asked him about his opinion

of the IMF policy and Washington Consensus. García Márquez confessed that he is not an expert in financial matters, 'but even I know that the sheet is too short, and if we pull the sheet up over our heads, our feet will stick out'.

THE DEBT OF BLOOD

When Captain Thomas Sankara, a young military officer, took power in his native country, he changed its name from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso – the land of upright people. This was in 1983, in the midst of the IMF-exacerbated debt crisis. 'The origins of debt go back to colonialism's origins,' Sankara said at the July 1987 Organization of African Unity summit; the point of the summit was to create a unified front of African states to repudiate their debts. 'We cannot repay the debt because we are not responsible for this debt,' Sankara said. 'On the contrary, others owe us something that no money can pay for. That is to say, the debt of blood.'

In a time of hopelessness, when debt ravaged the states of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Sankara came with hope and preached confidence. Stand up, he would say, and look the world in the eye, for your dignity cannot be diminished. It was a powerful message. In 1985, Sankara laid out his theory of confidence:

> You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future. It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen. We must dare to invent the future.

Imperialism would not allow this. The plots against him came fast and furiously.

The French have still not opened their archive on their activities, but rumours in Ouagadougou – Burkina Faso's capital – remain alive to French and CIA intervention to undermine Sankara's efforts. In 2009, Italian journalist Silvestro Montanaro interviewed Liberian Senator and warlord Prince Johnson, who told him – on tape – that 'there was an international plot to get rid of this man', meaning Sankara. Cyril Allen, a former head of Liberia's national petroleum company told Montanaro that 'Sankara was leaning too far left. The Americans were not happy with Sankara. He was talking of nationalizing his country's resources to benefit his people. He was a socialist, so he had to go'. General Momo Jiba, an aide-de-camp of Charles Taylor, the Liberian warlord, approached Sankara to allow Taylor to use Burkina Faso to launch his regional war. Sankara told Momo that he was not interested. Taylor met with Sankara's Defence Minister Blaise Compaoré in Mauritania along with a 'white man from Paris'. They then held another meeting in Libya, where they decided to kill Sankara. Cyill Allen said, 'The Americans and French sanctioned the plan. There was a CIA operative and the US embassy in Burkina Faso working closely with the secret service at the French embassy, and they made the crucial decisions.' Momo and Johnson were part of the plot.

Before he was shot to death on 15 October 1987, Sankara had written, 'Whatever the contradictions, whatever the oppositions, solutions will be found as long as confidence reigns.' The assassination of Sankara ended a long cycle of national liberation, as confidence dithered, as the debt crisis swept away hope, and as the USSR began its own slow demise.

ALL THE CAMERAS HAVE LEFT FOR THE NEXT WAR

After every war

someone has to clean up.

Things won't

straighten themselves up, after all.

Someone has to push the rubble

to the side of the road,

so the corpse-filled wagons

can pass.

Someone has to get mired

in scum and ashes,

sofa springs,

splintered glass,

and bloody rags.

Someone has to drag in a girder

to prop up a wall,

Someone has to glaze a window,

rehang a door.

Photogenic it's not,

and takes years.

All the cameras have left
for another war.

We'll need the bridges back,
and new railway stations.
Sleeves will go ragged
from rolling them up.

Someone, broom in hand,
still recalls the way it was.
Someone else listens
and nods with unsevered head.
But already there are those nearby
starting to mill about
who will find it dull.

From out of the bushes
sometimes someone still unearths
rusted-out arguments
and carries them to the garbage pile.

Those who knew
what was going on here
must make way for

those who know little.
And less than little.
And finally as little as nothing.

In the grass that has overgrown
causes and effects,
someone must be stretched out
blade of grass in his mouth
gazing at the clouds.

Wisława Szymborska, ‘The End and the Beginning’
(translated by Johanna Trzeciak)

PART 3

‘OUR STRATEGY MUST NOW REFOCUS’

As the lights went out in the USSR and as the Third World Project surrendered before imperialist liberalization, a new era of intervention opened up. If the previous era felt like a roll call of coups, interventions, and invasions, populated by a rogues’ gallery of butchers, assassins, and wheeler-dealers backed by Western intelligence services, now, after the fall of the USSR and the surrender of the Third World, the shield at the UN disappeared and the interventions from the West came like a tsunami.

It had been clear for several decades before 1989 that the United States had the most powerful military force in the world. The US invasion of Panama in 1989 was a dress rehearsal for the new wars of the post-Cold War era. The United States fastened upon an old ally – Manuel Noriega – who had served the CIA faithfully for decades; this ally was now demonized as the worst rascal on the planet, with the media bleating out its approbation of his many terrible qualities. Then, once the ideological terrain was set, the United States launched a massive invasion that began with aerial bombardment to pacify the recumbent security forces of the new enemy. The entire war was televised, with the visuals a warning to others not to stand against the United States, and a celebration for allies of the awesomeness of US power. Special Forces troops landed, grabbed Noriega, and then took him off to a trial and prison in the United States. The UN General Assembly condemned the invasion as a ‘flagrant violation of international law’. The UN Security Council hastily put together a resolution against the invasion, but – without argument – France, the United Kingdom, and the United States vetoed it. There was no embarrassment at this extreme use of force.

On 2 August 1990, Iraq's armies invaded Kuwait – partly in retribution for an oil dispute, partly because Saddam Hussein wished to claim an unpaid debt from the Gulf Arabs for the war against Iran. The United States, through the Carter Doctrine, was obliged to protect Saudi Arabia, which borders Kuwait. The United States President George H.W. Bush showed the Saudi King faked satellite photos of Iraqi troops on the Saudi borders; terrified Saudis then allowed the entire weight of the US war machine to descend on the Arabian Peninsula and in the waters of the Gulf. Under immense pressure from the United States, the UN passed resolution 661 (August 1990), which provides the template for all future sanctions regimes. This resolution allowed the UN to enforce a medieval siege against the people of Iraq from 1990 till the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. The US pressured the UN council members to adopt resolution 678 (November 1990) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter – which allowed 'member states' to use 'all necessary means', including armed action against Iraq. Cuba and Yemen were the only countries to vote against this resolution, which gave the United States permission from the UN to destroy Iraq. When the dust settled by March 1991, the UN sent a team into Iraq led by Under-Secretary General Martti Ahtisaari. It found that the US bombardment had returned Iraq to a 'pre-industrial age' and left it in a 'near apocalyptic' state. Iraq – without adequate food and provisions – was near 'imminent catastrophe', and that Iraq could face 'epidemic and famine if massive life-supporting needs are not rapidly met'. This did not move anyone. The UN resolutions came hard and fast, and Iraq's population suffered the destruction of civilization.

In 1996, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright went on *60 Minutes*. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had released a report on the impact of US-driven UN sanctions on Iraq. It showed that 567,000 Iraqi

children under the age of five had died because of these sanctions. Lesley Stahl of *60 Minutes* asked Albright, 'We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?' Neither *60 Minutes* nor Albright contested the UN report, or the damage done to Iraq. Albright did not wait for a second. She replied, 'I think this is a very hard choice, but the price – we think the price is worth it.' That was that, then. The total destruction of Iraq was worth it. But what was being purchased at that price? It was US supremacy.

Sitting in one of the regime's palaces on 24 February 1991, Saddam Hussein and his closest advisors worried about the onslaught that was to come. The US had been bombing Iraqi positions for the past month, and that day US forces entered Kuwait. Hussein wondered why the USSR had not intervened to prevent the escalation of the US armies in the Gulf region. Already the Soviet Union had begun its descent into collapse, which it would do later that year. But in February the Iraqi leadership wondered about the silence from Moscow. Saddam's Culture Minister, Hamid Hammadi, put the point plainly. The United States was not worried about Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, he said; Kuwait was hardly the real issue. US Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie had basically given Saddam Hussein the green light to invade Kuwait just before she went on vacation. Nor was the United States worried about Iraq's military power – severely depleted by the war against Iran; the Saudis knew that Saddam's invasion of Kuwait would stop at their border, since he had made no claim on Saudi land. Something else was afoot, Hammadi pointed out. 'All these developments intend not only to destroy Iraq,' he told the inner circle, 'but to eliminate the role of the Soviet Union so the United States can control the fate of all humanity.'

Hammadi's assessment mirrored that of the United States government's own analysts. A policy group of the US Defense Department – Team B – drafted a Defense Planning Guidance in 1990. 'Our first objective,' the Team – led by the future Vice President Dick Cheney – wrote,

> . . . is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed by the Soviet Union. This is the dominant consideration and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power. Our strategy must now refocus on precluding the emergence of any potential future global competitor.

This is what Hammadi told Hussein inside the palace as US bombs dropped around them. It is what the Project for a New American Century had said in its *Rebuilding America's Defenses* a decade later: 'American peace is to be maintained and expanded'; Pax Americana, another way of saying US imperialism, 'must have a secure foundation on unquestioned US military pre-eminence'. It would be repeated in George W. Bush's 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*: 'Our forces should be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in the hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States.'

But *asymmetrical war* – the total war – has never been sufficient. It can win battles and destroy cities, but it does not win wars and infiltrate the mind and heart. To have 'full-spectrum dominance' over a society requires more than that – it requires a *hybrid war* that includes sabotage and economic blockades as well as cultural and media campaigns to undermine

the truth. The hybrid war is a combination of unconventional and conventional means using a range of state and non-state actors that run across the spectrum of social and political life. Part of this hybrid warfare is the battle over ideas, with the United States and its oligarchic allies smothering hostile countries by sabotage and economic blockades and then egging on the population to act in a 'colour revolution' against the government. Once the regime is changed, there is no political weight for the people themselves to craft a new government which is more attuned to popular hopes. Instead, the cast of characters who people the new regime are old faces from the oligarchy and from various US training programmes.

'RISING POWERS CREATE INSTABILITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL STATE SYSTEM'

In 1991, US Secretary of State James Baker suggested that the hub-and-spoke system that defined the old, Cold War arrangements would remain intact in the new period, but it would be extended by the capture of multilateral organizations. He focused on the issue of East Asia. The history of the hub-and-spoke system had 'given form to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) process'; without that old history, there would be no possibility of building the APEC, an instrument for the smooth entry of transnational capitalist firms into the Asian region. Japan was the 'keystone' of the old hub-and-spokes system in East Asia; in the new system, Japan, South Korea, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Australia would be the 'stabilizing and strengthening spokes in the fan'. The multilateral organizations – APEC and ASEAN – would provide more legitimacy for the extension of US power than what was possible through the old hub-and-spokes architecture.

Such multilateral regional organizations – whether APEC in East Asia or OAS in the Americas – would work alongside nominally international organizations – such as the IMF and the World Bank – and regional financial institutions – such as the Asian Development Bank – to guide the US agenda across the world. If these ideas met with resistance, then pressure would come from the close military alliances that had either to be set up multilaterally or bilaterally, whether through NATO or ANZUS (the Australia, New Zealand, and US military alliance).

The teeth of imperialism were bared when the issue of military bases came up. When the USSR collapsed, the US government came under modest pressure from its population for a 'peace dividend', to transfer part of the military budget to social spending. But US President Bill Clinton had no political will to decrease the size of the US military or its global footprint. The US Assistant Defense Secretary Joseph Nye wrote a strategic document – *US Security Strategy in the East Asia-Pacific Region* – in 1995 that strengthened the US commitment to maintain its bases in East Asia; these bases included the effective US occupation of the Japanese island of Okinawa (where an entire fifth of the island is a US military base) and the return of the US base at Subic Bay (Philippines). Nye wrote that the US could not withdraw from its bases or its high defence spending because 'rising powers create instability in the international state system'. No power should be allowed to challenge the new architecture of global domination, with the US at the centre of this state system. The US must, Nye wrote in 1995, maintain all of its bases – especially in Asia – since these would enable 'us to respond quickly to protect our interests, not only in Asia but as far away as the Persian Gulf'. The Okinawa base, in particular, is 'the cornerstone of our security strategy for the entire region'. The will of the

Okinawan people, and those of the peoples in the Philippines and in Diego Garcia, were disregarded.

Suzuyo Takazato, head of the Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence, has called Okinawa 'Japan's prostituted daughter'. This is a stark characterization. Takazato's group was formed in 1995 as part of the protest against the rape of a 12-year-old girl by three US servicemen based in Okinawa. For decades now, Okinawans have complained about the creation of enclaves of their island that operate as places for the recreation of US soldiers. The photographer Mao Ishikawa has portrayed these places, the segregated bars where only US soldiers are allowed to go and meet Okinawan women (her book, *Red Flower: The Women of Okinawa*, collects many of these pictures from the 1970s). There have been at least 120 reported rapes since 1972, the 'tip of the iceberg', says Takazato. Every year there is at least one incident that shakes the conscience of the people – a terrible act of violence, a rape or a murder. What the people want is for the bases to close, since they see the bases as the reason for these acts of violence. It is not enough to call for justice after the incidents; it is necessary, they say, to remove the cause of the incidents – namely the bases. The wisdom of people like Suzuyo Takazato is that they say these bases – supposedly created to maintain security – are the reason for the insecurity of the Okinawan people.

The issue of Okinawa pushed ahead the newly founded Democratic Party of Japan to a landslide election victory in August 2009. The new Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama had made firm statements against the US bases on the island; the new Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said that it was 'very pathetic' for Japan to just 'follow what the US says'. US Defense Secretary Robert Gates carried orders from President Obama that Hatoyama's position on Okinawa could not be allowed. Gates came to Tokyo in October 2009,

refused to come to the welcome dinner, and said that there would be 'serious consequences' if Hatoyama went ahead with his policy promises. Obama was to come to Tokyo in November; now he shortened his trip to a 24-hour stopover on the way to the APEC meeting in Singapore. The pressure from Washington was unrelenting. Hatoyama tried to forge an alliance with China to counter US pressure. This was not helpful; it merely angered the US administration further. Hatoyama's party began to falter under the pressure, and he was forced to accept almost all the US demands. It was not enough. The US wanted more. Hatoyama told Obama at a dinner April 2010 that he would do what the US said. The tone of Obama's response was so sharp that the Japanese decided to keep no record of the conversation. Hatoyama surrendered, signed the US deal, and then resigned. This was a coup by pressure. There are 883 US military bases in 183 countries; by coup, their presence is made eternal.

In 2012, the CIA circulated a secret document inside the agency and to key US government departments with an interesting title – *A Master Narratives Approach to Understanding Base Politics in Okinawa*. This was a cultural studies exercise, a text that argued against the 'victimization narrative' that it said was pushed by people like former governor Masahide Ota and the left. Other narratives – the 'peaceful people' and the 'beautiful island' – portray Okinawa as pristine and being destroyed by the United States. To counter this 'narrative', the CIA suggested that the US government make it clear that Okinawa is a 'bridge to the world' (the 'crossroads narrative'), and that 'the bases in Okinawa help to keep the region safe and thereby enable enhanced regional economic and cultural exchange'. The bases, in other words, are a window to globalization – market economics on one side, and military power on the other. But not for the Okinawans; the

benefits are for transnational corporations, and the maintenance of the imperialist system from 'rising powers'.

'PAVE THE WHOLE COUNTRY'

Not long after the USSR collapsed, the US government seized the advantage to label all governments that did not agree with the US-led dispensation as 'rogue states'. The theory of rogue states and terrorism provided the US with the ability to appropriate the entire discourse of liberalism and human rights to its side – the West is *ipso facto* the arbiter of human rights and of liberalism, and those that it finds to be violators of these broad principles are rogue states and terrorists. If the US sanctions regime against Iraq could be shown (as FAO did show) to have been responsible for the death of half a million children, that was not to be seen as either the operations of a rogue state or of a terrorist – that was simply unfortunate. If a rogue state or a terrorist killed a few hundred people or even ten people, it was a human rights catastrophe. The sequestering of the narrative of human rights and liberalism by the US was as significant a triumph as its overwhelming military superiority. Now that military power could be utilized in the name of liberalism and human rights to procure for the US what it called Full-Spectrum Domination.

For the subsidiary allies, in their regional capitals, there was a great ideological advantage to mimic the general terms of the new 'hub and spoke' system. Any local threat to regional power could be either a rogue state (if it were a neighbouring state) or a terrorist (if it were an internal force). No more analysis was necessary. Colombia's war against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Sri Lanka's war against the Tamil Tigers, Turkey's war against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), or India's

war against the Maoists all hastily fit into this narrative; all states that needed to use any possible military method to crush local threats were given license to do so. Japan's desire to rearm, and Israel's calumnies against the Palestinians were justified by alleged threats by states that the United States branded as rogue, such as North Korea and Iran. The spokes had a great advantage by this new geography of power, reconstructing their older animosities around the new story being told from Washington.

The attack on the United States on 11 September 2001 was met by the US authorities – within days – with legal mechanisms that enabled the US to prosecute a permanent, global 'war on terror'. But the infrastructure for this war and tests for it had already taken place over the decade prior to 2001 – such as in the asymmetrical and hybrid war against Iraq, the bombardment of Yugoslavia, and the war against al-Qaeda. The justification was to enable the US to go to war not to pre-empt an attack, but to prevent an attack – which meant that it could go against anyone it believed would ever, even in the distant future, go against the United States. In his 2004 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush said that the US would never seek a 'permission slip' on security matters. This hearkens back to the attempted subordination of the UN to US whims, and the push in the 1990s and 2000s to use the UN asymmetrically for US interests – global norms would be created that would not apply to the US. US disregard for the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gases and on the Paris Treaty on climate change, towards the Rome Treaty that created the International Criminal Court, towards the Anti-Ballistic Missile Defence Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, towards the nuclear deal with Iran were the necessary consequences of the premise of US primacy. The War on Terror's violations of the Geneva Conventions, the Convention Against Torture, and even the US Constitution derived from the idea of primacy. Law, in the world of primacy,

is only useful if it constrains the actions of others, not of the most powerful state (mimicking the old feudal maxim: *nulle terre sans seigneur*, no land without the Lord – no right to live, in other words, without allowing the most powerful state licence to do what it will).

The list of rogue states would be drawn up by Washington, and only by Washington. In 1996, the CIA Director John Deutch listed four 'rogue nations' – Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Libya – in his report to the US Senate. These countries 'have built up significant military forces and seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction'. The list would later be extended to include Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Venezuela. The US gave itself the license to obliterate countries, a policy that went back to the genocide of the Native peoples of the Americas in the 18th century and to the US wars of the 19th century, such as in the Philippines; in 1898, General Jacob Smith ordered his troops to 'kill everyone over the age of ten' and create a 'howling wilderness' in the Philippines. A half century later, in Vietnam, a US helicopter team painted the slogan 'Death is Our Business, And Business is Good' on the side of their barracks. The landscape had to be pacified, or else destroyed. The ethos here was defined by US President Lyndon B. Johnson – 'it's silly talking about how many years we will have to spend in the jungles of Vietnam when we could pave the whole country and put parking stripes on it and still be home by Christmas'.

These were minor irritants. There were two others that Deutch recognized to be the real threats – 'two great powers, Russia and China, are in the process of metamorphosis and their final shape is still very much in question'. Russia had been neutralized by Boris Yeltsin and the oligarchs, who had asset stripped their country and delivered its hard-won sovereignty to international finance; his 'macroeconomic stabilization' policy lost Russia 50 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product and life expectancy fell by six

years (men) and three years (women) during the Yeltsin years from 1991 to 1999. China, meanwhile, had been deep in its reform phase that began in 1978 and got a renewed push in 1992. By the time Jiang Zemin took office in 1993, Chinese GDP had begun to skyrocket although the country suffered from a deep rural–urban divide which had deepened because of Deng Xiaoping's policy that 'some areas can get richer than others'. In 1996, when Deutch gave his report, these two states were neither threats nor rogue states. It was hoped that 'their final shape' would resemble the European Union – US subordinates to control the world.

The US only threatened countries whose militaries – the US war planners said – were a negligible threat to US power. If any country had a military that might actually threaten the US, then there would be no direct confrontation; only a country that could be obliterated from the skies would be threatened and attacked. But even here there were problems: any sign of resistance, such as in Somalia, would be met with withdrawal; imperialism can bomb entire countries but it found – even at its highest military point – that it cannot subordinate people.

BANKS NOT TANKS

In the 1980s, the Third World debt crisis eroded the sovereignty of a large part of the world, and – for complex reasons – the Communist state system began to fall apart. As these collapsed in the early 1990s, the United States asserted itself as the main pole, leading the imperialist bloc, in a range of areas from the iron cage of military power to the velvet glove of cultural desire. This was the period which the US and its allies called 'globalization'. The removal of the shields of the USSR, in particular, weakened the political will of the Third World bloc; the individual members of this bloc rushed to

Washington to kiss the ring of the US president, to seek modest economic gains, and to prevent its government from being seen as 'rogue' or 'terroristic'. Military agreements had to be signed as a precondition for trade deals.

But as globalization developed, a structural problem blocked its assertion. This problem was globalization itself, which saw production processes disarticulate around the planet; it saw the weakening of production in the West, where labour costs had risen as a result of a strike wave in the 1970s. Disaggregated production sites (with factories spread across states) and stringent intellectual property laws enable transnational corporations to have much more power along this global value chain than workers' organizations and nation-states. Diplomatic and military power of the imperialist alliance system was utilized against policies of nationalization and the intellectual commons. Sub-contracted mechanisms of labour discipline allowed the imperialist bloc to maintain its own moral reputation, despite the brutal work conditions that structure social relations in the factory system across the world.

Environmentally deleterious and inhumane practices of extraction are hidden away in forests and deserts, where protests will be fought by the imperialists and their sub-contractors in the name of the War on Terror or the War on Drugs or some kind of war that allows the extraction to take place without threat. Both the subsidiary partners of the imperialist bloc and the emergent states rely upon exports of raw materials for their growth agendas, allowing the imperialist bloc to wash its hands off the harshness that takes place in the dark – outside its direct control. Hundreds of billions of dollars are lost to the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America by the loot of precious resources, bought at low cost, the resources depleted, the earnings by the monopoly mining firms 'mispriced' and siphoned out of the

resource-rich, but powerless countries. No proper account of the total annual theft of this wealth is as yet available.

Vigorous trade policies in the last round of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), which resulted in the World Trade Organization (1994), and structural adjustment policies from the International Monetary Fund, forced countries of the Third World to insert themselves into the global value chain – sometimes to increase their own efficiencies – and to curtail any welfare policies for the vast masses; rarely did these policies and these pressures share the benefits of the advancements of capitalism with the global working-class and the peasantry. Rather, in this period, a series of 'IMF riots' took place – central being the 1989 uprising in Venezuela – and a series of 'IMF coups' – central being the 1987 assassination of Thomas Sankara and the overthrow of his government in Burkina Faso.

The key development in the past fifty years has been the construction of the global trade, finance, and development world through US-dominated institutions. It was US private banks – flush with Petro-dollars – that supplanted Central Banks (apart from the US Federal Reserve) at the centre of the world financial and trade system; these banks, and the US Federal Reserve, subjugated financial systems and exchange rates of most of the world's countries to that of the United States; it was the US, as a result, that produced the rules for international supervision of the banking and trade system, and it was the US that determined the entire regulatory framework for globalization. The US dollar became the central currency of this system; US ratings agencies and the US-dominated IMF became the measure of the strength of economies and firms; a European wire service – SWIFT – dominated the movement of money from one country to another. If any country displeased the US government, and if a regime of sanctions was put in place, this institutional architecture could throttle any government,

wiping out its lines of credit, making it impossible to sell its goods and settle payments. No system outside the control of the US government was allowed to remain in place.

On pain of extinction, the countries of the world had to accede to the US-driven order. When the Troika – the European Union, the European Central Bank, and the IMF – put pressure on Greece, the Greek foreign minister Yanis Varoufakis said with great wit that coups in the current period do not necessarily come through tanks; they often come through banks.

FIRST AMONG EQUALS

The massive US military force – geometrically larger than any other military force – spans the planet and threatens countries that it says are rogue states and threats to US preponderant power. During the first Gulf War of 1990–91, US President George H.W. Bush said that the 'Vietnam syndrome' had been quelled. The US now felt confident once more to act as a major power on the world stage – unafraid of exercising its full force. Proxy wars of the old days could be set aside. The US could now act with full-spectrum domination against its adversaries. Calls for 'another American century' resounded after the US war on Iraq in 2003. There was fear that the imbroglio in Iraq would heighten doubts about American power. This had to be squashed. It was important to revive anew the self-image of the United States as *primus inter pares* – the first among equals, the 'indispensable power', as former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright put it.

The end of the Cold War signalled the demise of the main threat to the alliance – the Soviet Union and its satellites. Since then, the United States and its confederates have made sure to squeeze dry any challenge to the

system. Pressure has built up on China and Russia through the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe and with the build-up of US forces in the Pacific Rim region. South America's emergence had to be cut down, whether through the old-fashioned coups (as in Honduras in 2009) or through newfangled lawfare coups (as in Brazil). Any attempt to build an alternative, regional power base – such as through the Bolivarian process in Latin America or through China's Belt and Road Initiative – has to be destroyed. In order to hold on to its only two warm water ports – in Sevastopol (in the Crimea) and in Latakia (in Syria) – Russia initiated military interventions into Ukraine in 2014 and into Syria in 2015; these are defensive manoeuvres that seek to protect Russian power projection, rather than aggressive moves to expand Russian influence. Nor are the Russian interventions nor the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, nor the Chinese–Russian alliance, signs of weakening US power. No new system to counter the US stranglehold on the world's economic and political foundation is available as yet.

An entire infrastructure of global security and military power had to be strengthened and enlarged. The US already had bases in almost every country; now these were expanded through the use of 'lily-pad bases', or cooperative security locations where US forces can land, refuel, and relax. US Ambassador to NATO Victoria Nuland described these cooperative security locations as 'unobtrusive bases' run by 'retired American non-combatants' who would outsource or subcontract the base maintenance work. Most militaries around the world would be forced to train with the US military in joint exercises that plugged in the military commands of these lesser states to the US command structure. The term here is 'inter-operatability', with militaries required to operate in a coordinated fashion with the US armed forces; the *Doctrine for Joint Operations* (1993) of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff notes that 'the nation providing the preponderance of

forces and resources typically provides the commander of the coalition force'. No guesses for who provides the 'preponderance' of military personnel and equipment, and therefore who leads. To be inter-operatable, the militaries around the world would be encouraged to buy US military hardware and software; little wonder then that the US arms companies saw their overseas sales balloon as these military-to-military pacts were signed. This inter-operatability structure allowed the US to craft new regional alliances – such as the Indo-Pacific Strategy – to yoke countries through military arrangements as well as trade and aid deals to US power projections. Finally, the huge military technology advances, including the use of drones, provide the US with a total global footprint. Through a programme called Prompt Global Strike (PGS), the US military hopes to be able to strike any part of the world with a precision-guided conventional weapon within one hour.

ONLY ONE MEMBER OF THE PERMANENT SECURITY COUNCIL - THE UNITED STATES

When he was the president of the UN General Assembly, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua used to talk about 'redecorated colonialism'. Western countries, notably the United States, had lost their legitimacy with the illegal war against Iraq of 2003 and with the financial crisis of 2007. It was to 'redecorate' colonialism that they pushed for a new doctrine – Responsibility to Protect (R2P) – to continue to justify the massive Western military apparatus that encircled the world and to justify the Western military interventions from West Asia to Central America. It was this 'redecorated' colonialism that enabled the Western powers to refurbish the 'liberal' international order and its economic instruments. It is this

'redecorated' colonialism that has cannily been able to reinsert itself as the humanitarian bloc in international affairs. A romance of the imperialist bourgeoisie asserted itself – US President Barack Obama playing a key role here as the 'cool' face of the brutal war machine. Trump's boorishness did not result in wishing for an end to the imperialist project, but – for the liberals in the West – a return to the sophistication of Obama. It is ideological suffocation that allows people to believe that the US-led bloc acts with high-minded intentions when it bombards places such as Iraq and Libya, and when it suffocates countries like Iran and Venezuela; even more so, it is this myopia that allows the view that the US-led bloc seeks to protect civilians and to offer development aid to lift the weight of misery off the world's hungry.

In 2011, the United States and France whipped the world into a frenzy about Muammar Qaddafi and the possibility of genocide in Libya. There was no evidence of any such danger; Saudi news outlets became the source for the Western press. It was this frenzy that allowed the United States and France to get a UN resolution to attack Libya, which they did immediately. Part of the resolution demanded a post-conflict study of the war. Once the dust settled by 2012 – although the Libya war still continues by other means – the UN set up a Commission of Inquiry to study NATO's actions in its bombing of Libya. This was a fairly straightforward action, with no ulterior motive behind the investigation. The Commission was tasked to look at the actions of all parties in the conflict that led to the decimation of Libya. NATO refused to cooperate with the inquiry. NATO's legal advisor Peter Olson wrote to the UN that these 'NATO incidents' are not crimes of any kind. 'We would accordingly request,' he noted in his letter, 'that in the event that the commission elects to include a discussion of NATO actions in Libya, its report clearly state that NATO did not deliberately target civilians

and did not commit war crimes in Libya.' In other words, that NATO get a free pass for its form of warfare. There was no liberal outrage at NATO's refusal to cooperate, no howls from the establishment's humanitarian champions. They simply assume that the imperialist bloc is innocent of any malevolent motive and that it cannot be seen to have deliberately targeted civilians or destroyed a nation. Even an investigation into such actions was not tolerable. This is the extent of the redecoration of colonialism.

John Bolton, who would go on to become Trump's National Security Advisor, said in 2000, 'If I were redoing the Security Council today, I'd have one permanent member because that's the real reflection of the distribution of power in the world.' Who would that member be? 'The United States,' Bolton replied. He was right. There is no other way, for example, to explain the behaviour of the Israeli state against the Palestinian people than to acknowledge the way the United States mobilizes its full power through the United Nations on behalf of the Israelis.

REPUBLIC OF NGOS

There are more NGOs in Haiti per capita than anywhere else in the world. But there are many NGOs in other places too. IMF demands to cut government budgets through the structural adjustment programmes helped shrink the State. In place of the weakened State came myriad NGOs, many of them providing services that had once been constitutionally mandated to be provided by a democratic State; or at least that was the hope. With the State weakened, and with NGOs everywhere, the government had less of a base of support among the public than before. Other sources of power began to exert themselves. These sources of power had no formal accountability to any democratic process; they are often only accountable to their funders,

who – in important cases – turn out to be the governments of the United States and of the European states. The agenda for countries such as Haiti is not set by the Haitian government, whose remaining task is to maintain security in the country, but by the international institutions such as the IMF and by governments such as the United States and France as well as by the United Nations. They set the terms for the Haitian people; they are, in other words, the imperial overlords of Haiti.

Haiti never had a chance. It had been treated as a standing threat since its revolution in 1804. Democracy was never to be permitted. The French government took $22 billion from Haiti for its revolution. A US-government-backed dictatorship of the Duvalier family for thirty years from 1950 sucked the country dry. François Duvalier's paramilitary formation – the Tonton Macoute, trained by the US military mission – killed over 50,000 people in this period, deepening their anti-Communist and anti-people ideologies in the society through fear and lies. Mass unrest overthrew the Duvalier regime in 1986. The new country entered its democratic phase with a visit to the IMF, which – along with the US State Department – 'recommended' a compulsory policy of trade liberalization. There was no forgiveness for the *odious debts* – debt incurred by a dictatorship with no input from the people. A movement known as the flood (*lavalas*), led by the former priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide, had overthrown the Duvaliers. In its first election, external money funded the right-wing candidate Marc Bazin, who had served in Duvalier's cabinet and at the World Bank. Nonetheless, Bazin was defeated by Aristide. Before Aristide could be inaugurated there was a coup by a Duvalier thug, who was then turned back by another massive mobilization of the people. Eight months into his presidency, Aristide was removed by Raoul Cédras, whose CIA-funded gangster organization FRAPH, attacked Aristide supporters; Cédras was funded by

the International Republican Institute, based in Washington. The violence that came from Cédras's government was worse than that of Duvalier; this violence destroyed the embryonic radical society created by the *Lavalas*.

Nonetheless, pressure from below brought Aristide back in 1994, who by force signed the Governor's Island Accord that allowed international institutions to run Haiti and to allow NGOs full rein in a county whose democratic institutions had been systematically undermined. When he came back to power in 1994, it was under the most benighted conditions, set by the Clinton White House and Wall Street. They wanted Haiti to become a *maquiladora*, not a country – a duty-free manufacturing unit for the benefit of multinational corporations. Because Haiti faced a balance of payments shortfall in 1998, it went to the IMF which demanded austerity policies. Aristide was not able to meet IMF demands, which led the IMF to freeze funds to the government. No such freeze applied to NGOs, so money flooded into them. The US Agency for International Development (USAID), created in 1961, is funded by the US government, and it – in turn – funds NGOs. Groups funded by USAID saw their budgets expand after 1998 (in 1995, the US Congress forced USAID to cease funding to the Haiti government, and to only fund NGOs). In 1995, Clinton's Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott told the US Senate that 'even after our exit in February 1996' – he was referring to a planned US military withdrawal – 'we will remain in charge by means of the USAID and the private sector'. USAID funded thousands of NGOs, who pushed its agenda in the country. USAID worked to refashion Haiti's farming sector into export-oriented agriculture, it worked to hold down minimum wage laws (such as Aristide's 1991 proposal to raise the minimum wage from $0.33 per hour to $0.50 per hour), and it worked to bring in food aid that dumped 'free' rice grown by US farmers (and bought by US funds) and destroyed Haitian rice

production; USAID promoted private education and undermined public schools and adult literacy programmes; USAID sidelined import duties on food so that US chicken firms could dump unwanted parts of the chicken onto Haiti, thereby destroying Haiti's poultry sector.

In 2009, under immense popular pressure, the Haitian government passed a law that raised the minimum wage from $0.24 per hour to $0.61 per hour. The new wage would have paid a Haitian worker $5 per day, less than the $12 estimated for a family of four in Haiti. US textile firms that operate in Haiti complained to the US embassy in Haiti, which then went and successfully lobbied the government to withdraw the increase. David Lindwall, Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy, said that the new minimum wage 'did not take economic reality into account'. The Haitian government – thanks to the US Embassy – only raised the minimum wage by $0.07, allowing firms such as Fruit of the Loom, Hanes, and Levi Strauss their massive profits.

Aristide was overthrown by a coup in 1991. His return to power in 1994 was an empty return – the Accord meant he watched as NGOs hollowed out his country's democratic possibilities. Nonetheless, Aristide won re-election in 2000. He came back to power with brio in his step, asking the French to pay Haiti $21 billion in restitution for the payments made by Haiti for its independence against slavery. It was clear on the ground that the far-right groups that began their assassinations of Fanmi Lavalas supporters had external support, and even clearer that this was a means to totally undermine Aristide; he was overthrown in a second coup in 2004, when he was – in his own words – kidnapped. It was not only Aristide that was kidnapped, but also the Haitian state. It is no longer to be found. It is now a Republic of NGOs, as are so many other states whose democratic institutions have been overthrown. These represent a third kind of coup –

after coups of the tanks and coups of the banks, there are now coups by NGOs.

MAXIMUM PRESSURE

Between 2001 and 2003, the US fought two wars against Iran's adversaries – Afghanistan's Taliban and Iraq's Saddam Hussein. Their defeat allowed Iran to spread its wings across the region. Recognizing the strategic error of these wars, the US then proceeded sharply to return Iran to its borders. It tried to weaken the link between Iran and Syria through the 2005 Syria Accountability Act (and the war on Syria from 2011), and it tried to destroy the Lebanese political force Hezbollah through the 2006 Israeli attack on Lebanon. Neither worked. In 2006, the US fabricated a crisis over Iran's nuclear energy programme; it engineered sanctions against Iran's economy by the UN, the European Union, and the US. This too did not work, and so in 2015 the US agreed to a nuclear deal, which Trump then rejected in 2018. US unilateral sanctions went into effect, and Iran's economy contracted rapidly. Trump named his policy 'Maximum Pressure'.

In October 2019, Human Rights Watch released a short report with a sharp title – *'Maximum Pressure': US Economic Sanctions Harm Iranians' Right to Health*. In November 2018, the US renewed its unilateral sanctions against Iran, and included 'secondary sanctions' on non-US entities. These secondary sanctions choked off Iran's ability to commercially buy many products, including crucial medical supplies. 'The consequences of redoubled US sanctions,' wrote Human Rights Watch, 'pose a serious threat to Iranians' right to health and access to essential medicines – and has almost certainly contributed to documented shortages – ranging from a lack of critical drugs for epilepsy patients to limited chemotherapy medications

for Iranians with cancer.' Human Rights Watch is not the first to document this serious situation. The unilateral US sanctions in the Obama period had already badly damaged the health of Iranians. In 2013, Siamak Namazi wrote a report for the Wilson Center, in which he noted, 'sanctions are indeed causing disruptions in the supply of medicine and medical equipment in Iran. Procurement of the most advanced life-saving medicines and their chemical raw materials from the United States and Europe has been particularly challenging'.

Over the course of the past several years, the medical journal *The Lancet* has run a series of important studies of the deteriorating health conditions in Iran as a result of the unilateral US sanctions. In August 2019, five doctors based in the United States and Iran, wrote a powerful editorial in *The Lancet*, which pointed out that Iran's system of universal health coverage has been deeply damaged by the sanctions, and that Iran is at 'a high risk of moving towards a severe situation for the provision of health services with a potentially substantive impact on mortality and morbidity'. Dr. Seyed Alireza Marandi, the president of Iran's Academy of Medical Sciences, wrote one of many letters to the UN Secretary General. He pointed out that patients who require organ transplants and who have cancer are being 'deliberately denied medicine and medical equipment'. There has been no public answer to these letters. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of the Unilateral Coercive Measures Idriss Jazairy concluded from a look at the sanctions regime, 'The current system creates doubt and ambiguity which makes it all but impossible for Iran to import these urgently needed humanitarian goods. This ambiguity causes a "chilling effect" which is likely to lead to silent deaths in hospitals as medicines run out, while the international media fail to notice.'

The United States government has used whatever mechanisms possible to suffocate Iran. It has used its Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) facility, its Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) list, and its Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) to tighten its grip on the Iranian economy. Human Rights Watch reiterated what humanitarian agencies have been saying over this past year, which is that banks refuse to allow their services to be used to transfer money even for humanitarian reasons. In August 2019, Jan Egeland, the head of the Norwegian Refugee Council which works with Afghan refugees in Iran, said, 'We have now, for a full year, tried to find banks that are able and willing to transfer money from donors.' Egeland is not naïve. He was the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief from 2003 to 2006. Squeezing the banks has allowed the US government to wreak havoc with Iran's ability to import food and medicines, impacting upon the human rights of Iranians. All this points in one direction: that the US government is not merely intent on hurting the government, but in fact has a strategy to attack the Iranian people.

The Human Rights Watch report is called '*Maximum Pressure*' for a reason. This is the phrase associated with the Trump policy towards Iran which led to the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA) and the reinstatement of harsh sanctions. As the US put these sanctions on Iran in November 2018, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said, 'The maximum pressure exerted by the United States is only going to mount from here.' This is, as Human Rights Watch notes, 'a recipe for collective punishment'.

Universal health care has been the basic policy orientation of the Iranian government. The programme received focus in 1985 with the establishment of the National Health Network, and then over the next several decades –

hampered by lack of resources – the rural and urban Family Physician programmes. By all indications, the health care system in Iran has been sharply hit by the sanctions – mainly since this has made it impossible to import key materials (for example, bandages for epidermolysis bullosa and drugs to reduce inflammations such as tumour necrosis, that inflicts those who had been struck by chemical weapons used by Iraq against Iran – and supplied by Western Europe and the United States). Iran has over the past century developed a high-quality indigenous pharmaceutical industry – now rooted in the public sector Social Security Investment Company. Until the past few years, Iran had been able to produce a wide range of drugs, but even here there has been attrition, since several of these production lines rely upon imports of key components of the drugs.

The United Nations has repeatedly said that sanctions are not a humane policy and must no longer be allowed to be part of the arsenal of the powerful nations. Exceptions for medicines and food are routinely argued for. The United States claims that it does not use sanctions to hurt people, which is why it often provides exceptions. In August 2019, the US government released a guidance that putatively softened its policy vis-à-vis Venezuela. It said that 'humanitarian support can flow' into Venezuela. Even if this is merely rhetoric, no such softening has occurred for Iran. The US has not issued any such guidance towards its policy on Iran. Rather, it has tightened these dangerous sanctions as part of its hybrid war against Iran.

In 1980, the Iranians had created the Quds Force – Quds being the Arabic name for Jerusalem. The point of this Force was to develop regional linkages for a beleaguered Iran. In its early years, the Quds Force participated in operations both against Western interests and against the regional Left (including attacks on the Afghan Communist government of Mohammad Najibullah). But in the past decade, under the leadership of

Major General Qassem Soleimani and other veterans of the Iraq–Iran war, the Quds Force developed a more precise agenda.

Iran's leadership has known that it cannot withstand a full attack by the United States and its allies; the barrage of US cruise missiles and bombs pose an existential threat to Iran. This kind of war has to be avoided. Unlike North Korea, Iran has neither a nuclear shield nor the potential or desire to build one; however, the examples of Iraq and Libya, which gave up their weapons of mass destruction shield, show what can be done to countries that have no nuclear deterrent. Neither Iraq nor Libya threatened the West, and yet both countries were destroyed. It was the Quds Force that developed a partial deterrent against a Western attack on Iran. Soleimani's Quds Force went from Lebanon to Afghanistan to build relations with pro-Iranian groups and to encourage and support them in building up militia groups. The war on Syria was a testing ground for these groups. These groups are prepared to strike at US targets if Iran is attacked in any way. After the United States assassinated Soleimani in early 2020, the Iranians said that if they were attacked further, they would destroy Dubai (United Arab Emirates) and Haifa (Israel). Iranian short-range missiles can hit Dubai; but it is Hezbollah that will strike Haifa. That means that the United States and its allies will face a full-scale *regional guerrilla war* if there is any bombing run on Iran. These militias are the deterrent for Iran. This is not aggressive; this is merely a defensive posture against the wrath of imperialism.

Iran's politics are defined by the immense pressure put upon the country by the United States and its regional allies (Israel and Saudi Arabia). The width of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 carried within it an Iranian Left, which now no longer exists. In Iraq, the Communists have re-emerged haltingly, and have participated in the revolts since 2011 against a government whose policies are utterly dictated by an IMF agenda. 'We want

a homeland,' cry Iraqis in their recent protests. So do people from Lebanon to Afghanistan. During the Iranian Revolution, a left group wrote on the walls of the Ministry of Justice: At freedom's dawn, freedom's place is empty ('*dar tulu-e azadi, ja-ye azadi khali*'). The revolt had happened, but the full promise of revolution had been suspended.

ACCELERATE THE CHAOS

In 2017, as the right-wing wave swept across the American hemisphere, representatives of 12 countries met in Lima (Peru) to form a bloc. The purpose of this Lima Group was to overthrow the government of President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela. It is led by Canada, which is home to most of the world's largest mining companies; many of these mining companies have an interest in tearing the soil of the Americas and extracting its wealth for their profit. The United States had tried to end the Bolivarian Revolution almost as soon as it began in 1999. A *coup d'état* failed in 2002, but this did not deter the United States. However, the chaos due to the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq deflected attention elsewhere, and the 'pink tide' of left governments in the Caribbean and Latin America prevented the full-scale attack on Venezuela.

By 2017, almost twenty years into the Bolivarian Revolution, Venezuela seemed an easier target. Lower commodity prices had produced economic problems for the country, and a series of right-wing governments were now present around the region. The coup in Honduras in 2009 began a process that brought right-leaning governments to power in most of the countries that came to Lima, including in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico – the largest and most important countries in that group. Diplomatic isolation came first, followed rapidly by economic isolation – led by extremely harsh US

economic sanctions. Venezuela, already struggling from low commodity prices, saw its economy go into a tailspin.

The point of the Lima Group and US intervention was to create a social disaster in Venezuela. US officials openly talked about using the full range of hybrid war techniques to create chaos in Venezuela. In 2018, former US ambassador to Venezuela William Brownfield said that the United States, multilateral organizations, and the Lima Group had to 'accelerate the collapse' of Venezuela. 'We should do it,' he said, 'understanding that it's going to have an impact on millions and millions of people who are already having great difficulty finding enough to eat.' Based on this cruel judgment, the various right-wing governments in the region hardened their blockade on Venezuela. It was clear to the US government that if they could overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, they would weaken Cuba and even force the collapse of the Cuban Revolution.

In January 2019, the US government attempted an open coup against the government of Maduro. They set up a pretender government led by Juan Guaidó, a minor legislator, and used every means – including sabotage – to weaken the government, create social disorder, fracture the Bolivarian support base, and erode the government's authority. This hybrid war struck hard, with Venezuela finding its gold reserves in the United Kingdom stolen, its ability to use international financial channels closed, and its facilities to sell oil sealed. An almost total embargo of the country and its 32 million people went into place.

A report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research found that during the calendar year from August 2017, Trump's sanctions had killed at least 40,000 people and reduced the availability of food and medicines. As these sanctions remain in effect, they prevent 80,000 people with HIV from

getting anti-retroviral drugs, they prevent 16,000 people from getting regular dialysis, they prevent 16,000 with cancer from getting treatment, and they prevent four million people with diabetes and hypertension from getting insulin and cardiovascular medicine. The social impact of these sanctions has been catastrophic.

And yet, the government did not fall. In fact, rally upon rally of the people on the streets of the main cities suggested that popular support from the working class, the peasantry, and the urban poor was with the government. Frustration led the US and its asset – Guaidó – to attempt a military coup in April 2019. This failed. Maduro remained in power. Venezuela's economy remains fragile, and its social life has been deeply impacted by the sanctions; yet, the political commitment of a large part of the population to remain with the government is clear.

The hybrid war against Venezuela did not succeed; the determination of the Bolivarian Revolution to stand its ground provided an inspiration on the continent. It is important to recognize that from Mexico to Chile, there has been a clear-sighted understanding that the US hybrid war on Venezuela was not for 'human rights' or 'democracy', but to expand US imperial interests. The defeat of the US in Venezuela provided the confidence across the region to deepen the struggle not only against the tentacles of the United States and the IMF, but also against local oligarchies.

SANCTIONS ARE A CRIME

Swiftly moves the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), dashing across continents, skipping over oceans, terrifying populations in every country. The numbers of those infected rise, as do the numbers of those who have died. Hands are being washed, tests are being done, and 'social distance' has

become a new phrase. It is unclear how devastating this pandemic will be. In the midst of a pandemic, one would expect that all countries would collaborate in every way to mitigate the spread of the virus and its impact on human society. One would expect that a humanitarian crisis of this magnitude would provide the opportunity to suspend or end all inhumane economic sanctions and political blockades against certain countries. The main point here is this: Was this not the time for the imperialist bloc, led by the United States of America, to have ended the sanctions against Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, and a series of other countries?

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza told Paola Estrada and me recently that the 'illegal and unilateral coercive measures that the United States has imposed on Venezuela are a form of collective punishment'. The use of the phrase 'collective punishment' is significant; under the 1949 Geneva Conventions, any policy that inflicts damage on an entire population is a war crime. The US policy, Arreaza told us, has 'resulted in difficulties for the timely acquisition of medicines'. On paper, the unilateral US sanctions say that medical supplies are exempt. But this is an illusion. Neither Venezuela nor Iran can easily buy medical supplies, nor can they easily transport them into their countries, nor can they use them in their largely public-sector health systems. The embargo against these countries – in the time of Covid-19 – was not only a war crime by the standards of the Geneva Conventions (1949) but was a crime against humanity as defined by the United Nations's International Law Commission (1947).

In 2017, US President Donald Trump enacted tight restrictions on Venezuela's ability to access financial markets; two years later, the US government blacklisted Venezuela's central bank and put a general embargo against Venezuelan state institutions. If any firm trades with Venezuela's public sector, it could face secondary sanctions. The US Congress passed the

Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) in 2017, which tightened sanctions against Iran, Russia and North Korea. The next year, Trump imposed a raft of new sanctions against Tehran that suffocated Iran's economy. Once more, lack of access to the world banking system and threats to companies that traded with Iran made it almost impossible for Iran to do business with the world. In particular, the US government made it clear that any business with the public sector of Iran and Venezuela was forbidden. The health infrastructure that provides for the mass of the populations in both Iran and Venezuela is run by the state, which means it faces disproportionate difficulty in accessing equipment and supplies, including testing kits and medicines.

Arreaza told us that his government had quickly become alert to the dangers of Covid-19 with a health infrastructure that had been affected by the sanctions. 'We are breaking the blockade,' Arreaza said, 'through the World Health Organization, through which we have obtained medicine and the tests to detect the illness.' The WHO, despite its own crisis of funds, began to play a key role in both Venezuela and Iran. Nonetheless, the WHO faced its own challenges with sanctions, particularly when it comes to transportation. These harsh sanctions forced transportation companies to reconsider servicing both Iran and Venezuela. Some airlines stopped flying there; many shipping companies decided not to anger Washington. When the WHO tried to get testing kits for Covid-19 from the United Arab Emirates into Iran, it faced difficulty – as the WHO's Christoph Hamelmann put it – 'due to flight restrictions'; the UAE sent the equipment via a military transport plane.

Likewise, Arreaza told us, Venezuela has 'received solidarity from governments of countries such as China and Cuba'. This is a key issue. China, despite its own challenges from Covid-19, had begun to supply

testing kits and medical equipment to Iran and to Venezuela; it was China's vigorous reaction to the virus that has now slowed down its spread within China itself. In late February, a team from the Red Cross Society of China arrived in Tehran to exchange information with the Iranian Red Cross and with WHO officials; China also donated testing kits and supplies. The sanctions, Chinese officials told us, should be of no consequence during a humanitarian crisis such as this; they are not going to honour them. Meanwhile, the Iranians developed an app to help their population during the Covid-19 outbreak; Google decided to remove it from its app store, a consequence of the US sanctions.

Yolimar Mejías Escorcha, an industrial engineer, told us that the sanctions regime has put a lot of pressure on everyday life in Venezuela. She says that the government 'continues to make an effort to ensure that people who most need it get health care, education, and food'. The opposition has tried to say that the crisis is a consequence of the government's inefficiency rather than a result of the imperialist blockade on Venezuela. In early March, a new campaign was launched in the country called 'Sanctions Are a Crime'. She hoped that this campaign would explain clearly to people why there are shortages in her country – the sanctions being the core reason.

In 2019, a group of countries met at the United Nations in New York to discuss the US unilateral sanctions that violated the UN Charter. The intent was to work through the Non-Aligned Movement to create a formal group that would respond to these sanctions. Arreaza told us that Venezuela supports this initiative but also the declaration of principles drafted by Iran against unilateralism and the Russian formal complaint about denial of visas for officials to visit the UN building in New York. 'We hope to resume meetings this year once the difficulties presented by Covid-19 are overcome,'

he said. They want to meet again, Arreaza said, to 'advance joint, concrete actions'.

When the United States continues its embargoes against more than 50 countries – but mostly against Cuba, Iran and Venezuela – when there is a global pandemic afoot, what does this say about the nature of power and authority in our world? Sensitive people should be offended by such behaviour, its mean-spiritedness evident in the unnatural deaths that it provokes. That is why Iran took the case of US sanctions to the International Court of Justice, which ruled – in early March 2020 – that the United States must withdraw its harsh sanctions. The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo reacted in character: 'I am surprised that the court failed to recognize its lack of jurisdication,' he said. No international body dare tell the United States what to do, even in a time of a global pandemic.

LAW AS A WEAPON OF WAR

The coup against the government of President Dilma Rousseff of the Workers' Party in Brazil seemed pretty straightforward. The media of the oligarchy – led by the Globo Group – began to make accusations against her, igniting the opposition to paralyse the government. Despite this, she won a second term at the end of 2014. But the opposition went forward with a case of corruption against her; there was no evidence of any kind, as demonstrated later by the Brazilian Senate. She was impeached. It is widely thought that she was the victim of a parliamentary coup.

Major General Charles Dunlap of the US Military uses the term lawfare to describe what happened to Dilma Rousseff; this is the 'use of law as a weapon of war'. The right wing took power after her impeachment. But the right still feared that they would not be able to win an election if the

Workers' Party's Lula ran against any of their candidates. Lula had won two consecutive elections to govern Brazil from 2003 to 2010. At the close of his second term, Lula had an approval rating of 86 per cent – the highest in the history of Brazil. His poverty reduction programmes – particularly his hunger alleviation schemes – earned his government praise from around the world. Income redistribution through social programmes such as Bolsa Família, Brasil Sem Miséria, the expansion of credit, the increase in decent work, and the increase in the minimum wage lifted almost 30 million (out of 209 million) Brazilians out of poverty. Brazil paid off its debts to the IMF and the government discovered a massive new oil reserve in the Santos Basin, off the coast of São Paulo. This oil could eventually change Brazil's strategic position in the world.

Judge Sérgio Moro brought a case of corruption against Lula in April 2015. Curitiba's Public Prosecutor's Office – led by Deltan Dallagnol – was in charge of an investigation around corruption allegations at Brazil's state energy firm, Petrobras. Because a car wash became part of the money laundering investigation, the Task Force was known as Lava Jato (Car Wash). The Task Force uncovered activity by contractors such as OAS and Odebrecht, who had – it turns out – remodelled an apartment on the coast and a farm in the interior that was supposedly owned by Lula. These firms, it was said by the Task Force, had gained concessions from Petrobras. Lula, the Task Force argued, benefited from the contractors, who in turn benefited from state largess. This was the allegation. The prosecutors could not prove that Lula had ever owned the apartment and the farm. Nor could they prove any benefit to the contractors. Lula was convicted – bizarrely – of *unspecified acts*. A former OAS director, Léo Pinheiro, who had been convicted of money laundering and corruption in 2014 and was to serve 16 years, gave

evidence against Lula; for this evidence, his sentence was reduced. There was no material evidence against Lula.

The Lava Jato investigation was a major advantage for transnational firms. The harassment of the Brazilian airplane construction firm Embraer by the justice department forced it to be sold to Boeing. Petrobras, a major jewel in a national development strategy, had to sell 75 per cent of its petroleum reserves to BP, British Shell, Chevron, CNOOC, ExxonMobil, QPI, and Statoil. The Amazon was opened for business, its resources to be mined and sold to the profit of transnational firms.

Lula could not run for the presidency. The removal of Lula from a presidential election that he would have won handily is an instance of lawfare, the use of the law to conduct a political coup against the forces of the left.

In 2017, US Department of Justice officials visited Judge Moro as he built his case against Lula. US Assistant Attorney General Kenneth Blanco said that the US justice officials had 'informal communications' about the removal of Lula from the Brazilian presidential election of 2018. On 6 March 2019, the US Department of Justice said that it would transfer 80 per cent of the fines it received from Petrobras to the Public Prosecutor's Office to set up an 'anti-corruption investment fund'. It is fair to say that this is a payment to the Lava Jato team for its work in removing Lula from the presidential race. In 2014, President Dilma Rousseff had mandated that 100 per cent of the oil royalties go to the sectors of public health and education; now they are essentially a bribe to the right-wing jurists who prevented a Lula re-election. Moro, the master of lawfare, joined the cabinet of the winner of that election, Jair Bolsonaro.

The persecution of Lula is a story that is not merely about Lula, nor solely about Brazil. This is a test case for the way oligarchies and imperialism have sought to use the shell of democracy to undermine the democratic aspirations of the people. It is the methodology of democracy without democracy, a Potemkin village of liberalism.

DYNAMITE IN THE STREETS

It was a coup. On 10 November 2019, Bolivia's president Evo Morales Ayma resigned from office. He had been re-elected to the presidency on 23 October; this was to be his fourth term in office. On 9 November, rumours across Bolivia suggested that the police would open a corridor for right-wing militias to enter the presidential palace and kill Morales. Tension gripped the country. Morales came before the press, called for fresh elections, and said that the Congress can appoint a new election commission. The political parties of the oligarchy – led by Morales's challenger, Carlos Mesa – rejected the offer. Mesa, who had been the president before Morales, had called for 'permanent protests' after he had lost the election. These 'permanent protests' escalated into a rebellion, with the police joining the ranks of an insurgency of the oligarchs (the police were frustrated with Morales because he had taken away their opportunities for petty corruption). Morales might have remained in power had the military stayed neutral. But General Williams Kaliman, who was trained by the US military, asked Morales to step down. It was less a request than a demand. Morales had no choice. He had to resign.

When Evo Morales came to power in 2006, he was the first indigenous president of this republic which was formed in 1825. Two-thirds of Bolivia's population come from various indigenous communities; they have lived in

poverty and have suffered humiliation from those who claim descent from the Spaniards. Morales had won a landslide in 2005, which enabled his Movement for Socialism (MAS) to drive an agenda for the vast mass of the people, including to push for dignity for the indigenous communities. In the newly written constitution (2009), the flag of the indigenous communities – the Wiphala – became equivalent to the old flag of Bolivia. This gesture was fundamental, as the Wiphala was sown onto the uniforms of the military and it was raised onto government buildings. Bolivia, this plurinational state, was no longer going to denigrate its indigenous heritage.

Morales, as president, put forward not only an indigenous agenda, but a socialist one as well. His Movement for Socialism was formed by a range of social and political movements, which included organizations of the indigenous and trade unions. His predecessor – Carlos Mesa – was hit hard by protests against gas and water privatization and against the destruction of Bolivia's coca crop. Morales, a leader of the coca growers, was rooted in these movements. At the United Nations in 2019, Evo Morales said that Bolivia – since 2006 – has cut it poverty from 38.2 per cent to 15.2 per cent, increased its life expectancy rate by nine years, is now 100 per cent literate, has developed a Universal Health Care system, ensured that over a million women received land tenure, and have a parliament where more than 50 per cent of the elected officials are women. How did Bolivia do this? 'We nationalized our natural resources,' Morales said, 'and our strategic companies. We have taken control of our destiny.' These resources – which include fossil fuels but also key strategic metals such as Indium and Lithium – have been desired by transnational firms for decades. During his 13 years as president, Morales was able to tackle hundreds of years of entrenched inequality.

Morales won his first election to the presidency when the 'pink tide' had been established from Venezuela to Argentina. When commodity prices fell, many of these left-leaning governments lost power, but Morales remained popular and won election after election on a firm mandate of expanding Bolivian democracy. But he faced opposition from Bolivia's oligarchy and from the US, which had long wanted Morales removed from office. When Morales came to power, the US embassy in La Paz – Bolivia's capital – called him an 'illegal-coca agitator'. Plans to destabilize the government began immediately. The new government was informed that the US would delay all loans and discussions on debt relief until Morales displayed 'good behaviour'. If he tried to nationalize any of the key sectors, or if he rolled back the anti-coca policies, then he would be penalized. Morales showed no such fealty to the US. In fact, he embraced the turn to the left in Latin America and developed a very close link to both Cuba and Venezuela.

Fears of a coup are not distant in Bolivia, which has had coups in 1964, 1970, and 1980. The armed forces – highly influenced by the US – were always on standby for a scenario where they could eject Morales. But the enormous popularity of Morales personally and of the MAS prevented any such armed action. Morales's socialist agenda improved the everyday lives of the people, even as commodity prices declined. The coup against Morales was always on the agenda; but it had to be delayed because of his deep ties with the people and because of his successful socialist agenda.

The lead-up to the election of 20 October 2019 was highly fraught. Morales had sought a fourth term, for which he required judicial sanction. The Supreme Court ruled in November 2017 that he could run for another term. In this election, Morales beat Carlos Mesa by over ten points, sufficient for him to win the presidency in the first round of voting. But Mesa refused to accept the result. The OAS, deeply politicized and highly

influenced by the US, sent in a monitoring team whose preliminary report found irregularities in the counting of the votes. The entire case by the OAS rested on what it called 'drastic and hard-to-explain change in the trend of the preliminary results after the closing of the polls'. But the OAS offered no evidence for this claim. The Center for Economic and Policy Research found that there were no irregularities, and that the OAS claim was unfounded. In February 2020, long after the coup had taken place, two researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found no evidence of any fraud in the election; the OAS refused to get back to them – or to anyone – with a comment. Nonetheless, key US officials and the Bolivian oligarchy seized on the OAS claim and tried to nullify the election results. It was based on this that the right wing called upon its support base to flood the streets, and it was based on this that the police forces decided to mutiny. The role of the OAS and the US government in giving legitimacy to the coup process was key.

In July 2007, US Ambassador Philip Goldberg sent a cable to Washington in which he pointed out that US mining firms had approached his embassy to ask about the investment climate in Bolivia. Goldberg felt that the situation for mining firms was not good. When asked if he could organize a meeting with Vice President Álvaro García Linera, he said, 'Sadly, without dynamite in the streets, it is uncertain whether the Embassy or the international mining companies will be able to attain even this minimal goal.' *Without dynamite in the streets*, a phrase worth dwelling upon. A year later, Morales expelled Goldberg from Bolivia, accusing him of aiding the protests in the town of Santa Clara. A decade later, it was the 'dynamite' that removed Morales from power.

WE BELIEVE IN PEOPLE AND LIFE

It is not for nothing that Latin America has produced so many hundreds of great poets, most of them people of the Left and many of them militants of various movements. They are needed to expand our imagination, to give us courage in our fight and to shine a light into the future. Among them is Otto René Castillo (1936–1967), one of Guatemala's great voices. Castillo took his notebooks with him to Guatemala's jungles, where he picked up the gun and joined the Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (Rebel Armed Forces). His faith in the capacity of people to overcome the counter-revolutionary wars of his day danced into his poetry.

Lo más hermoso

para los que han combatido

su vida entera,

es llegar al final y decir:

creíamos en el hombre y la vida

y la vida y el hombre

jamás nos defraudaron.

The most beautiful thing

for those who have fought a whole life

is to come to the end and say;

we believed in people and life,

and life and the people

never let us down.

Castillo, along with his comrade Nora Paíz Cárcamo (1944– 1967), was captured in March of 1967, taken to the Zacapa barrack, tortured and then burned alive. Along with them, the army killed 13 peasants, clothed them in rebel uniforms and left them all for dead – pretending that they had been killed in combat (a familiar ploy in today's Colombia). No such thing had occurred. All 15 had been massacred in the military base of Las Palmas. This is the way of the camp of the coup. It wants to steal the soul of the people so as to reduce people into zombies who must bow their heads down and work, putting their precious labour towards the accumulation of capital for the tyrants of the economy.

SOURCES

A book like this relies upon a wide range of sources, but more than that, it relies upon a lifetime of activity and of reading. Listing all the books and articles would surely make this book double its current size. I have been involved – in one way or another – in the left movement for decades, and in these decades have been active in campaigns against the criminal behaviour of imperialism. And I have been reading about this behaviour in pamphlets and newspapers for these past many decades. There is no greater clarity for a writer than being involved in the very process that they wish to write about; distance is useful, surely, but distance can also create a false sense of dispassion.

My first indelible memory of political activity comes from the US intervention in Grenada in 1983. Here was a small island nation in the Caribbean, with not even a population of 100,000, that had been experimenting with its own form of socialism through the New Jewel Movement. The United States government, rather quickly, developed a narrative that it fed to the corporate press, of Cuban involvement in the New Jewel Movement and in the government of its leader Maurice Bishop. This was likely true, but the point was not whether it was true; the point was to tar the New Jewel Movement with the brush of communism and Cuban as well as Soviet involvement. It is precisely what the US government had done to all revolutionary struggles in Central America and the Caribbean in this period, allowing the bogey of communism to justify their support for the most wretched right-wing – often genocidal – forces in the region. My first essay for a newspaper was written on the US intervention into Grenada (it was published in my school's alternative newspaper, *The Circle*).

The first draft of history, the truism goes, is the media; like all truisms, it is only partly correct. In the case of imperialism, it is downright misleading. The corporate media in the West – and the media elsewhere that mirrors it – is not capable of writing the first draft of history because it is a part of the story. It takes dictation from the imperialist institutions, such as the CIA, and produces narratives that have varying degrees of truth to them, but which are almost always stories that are framed by what suits Western interests, rather than by the facts on the ground. To read the media about Grenada after the 1979 revolution was to take stenography from the US government. In 1979, for instance, the *New York Times* ran a story called 'Radical Grenada Symbolizes Political Shift in Caribbean' (20 August). The story was anchored by two paragraphs of quotations from John A. Bushnell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of Inter-American Affairs in the US government. Bushnell said that while the US government does 'not believe that Cuba is following some master plan for expanding its influence in the Caribbean', nonetheless 'there also appears to be a drawing together of young radicals and radical movements in the Caribbean, encouraged by the recent events in Grenada and perhaps also by Cuba'. Cuba, he said, is a 'patron of revolutionaries' and it comes to 'the aid of radical regimes'. There was no detailed account of the plans of the Bishop government; no voices from that government, nothing really about the Grenadian people's desperation for a different kind of future.

To get the point of view of the New Jewel Movement, its own newspapers were invaluable, as were the speeches of Maurice Bishop; Bishop spoke openly about the challenges in this small island and offered an expansive vision of what would be possible if the people found themselves truly to be in charge (these are collected in *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, New York, 1983). For a socialist account of the revolution, the first draft of history

must be the records of the government (1979–83) and the words left behind by its architects. These offer the revolution in its own words. But a revolution – like the counter-revolution – is capable of being blinded by its own rhetoric, which is why its critics from the left are often invaluable guides to the revolutionary process. In the days before the internet, it was hard to follow these debates, easy to be swept away by the calumnies of the corporate media. But there were always solidarity platforms – such as the Ecumenical Program for Interamerican Communication and Action (EPICA) and TransAfrica – that produced their own dossiers and bulletins; these would be filled with newspaper clippings and documents of all kinds, a hodgepodge of essential information that would circulate among leftists who were in solidarity with experiments such as the New Jewel Movement and who were outraged by imperialism's antics. Such collections are key to the archive of a book such as *Washington Bullets*.

In 1983, the US invaded Grenada and swept aside the New Jewel Movement.

It was not until 2012 that the National Security Archive – a not-for-profit investigative project in the United States – was able to attain 226 documents, largely from the US State Department, about Grenada. These documents allow a meticulous researcher to piece together the story of how the US government conducted a hybrid war against the Maurice Bishop government and how it created the conditions for its invasion. A close read of these documents shows how obsessed the US government was with the potential for Cuban and Soviet involvement in Grenada, and how this motivated every negative policy decision of the administration of Ronald Reagan against the New Jewel Movement. The real first draft of history is this secret trove of documents, which come to light decades after the event. This book is written with these sorts of documents in hand, State

Department and CIA materials that are either available in the CIA's own digital archive, or through the National Security Archive, or else in the private papers of former State Department and CIA officials as well as US presidents. It takes a lot of effort to run down some of these papers, and even more effort to learn to read them carefully. These documents cannot be taken at face value because – as I have learned over the years in talking to retired CIA and State Department officers – there is a great deal of career-driven exaggeration. One has to sift through the information with care and diligence.

Nothing is as valuable as hindsight, and often the best hindsight comes in memoirs and in memories as well as in academic work. Maurice Bishop was killed, and Milan Bish – the key US ambassador – is now dead. But Wendy Grenade, who teaches at the University of West Indies, Cave Hill (Barbados), edited a book in 2015 called *The Grenada Revolution: Reflections and Lessons*, which had an interview with Bernard Coard, who was Bishop's deputy and would have Bishop arrested (how Bishop died remains a mystery); and two essays by participants in the revolution – Brian Meeks and Patsy Lewis. A book such as edited by Grenade presents an opportunity for participants to look back and offer their own context for the revolution, and it allows other contributors to assess the nature of the *coup d'état* against the New Jewel Movement. The kind of book you have just read cannot be written without reading the vast and important secondary literature, often the best place to understand the contours of the national liberation revolutions that provoke Washington's bullets.

Nothing has been as useful to me in writing this book as the conversations I have had with ex-CIA agents, people such as Chuck Cogan, Rafael Quintero, and Tyler Drumheller. John Stockwell's *In Search of Enemies* (1978) is a book designed to clear the conscience of a man who was

disgusted by the work he had done. Stockwell was in Grenada just before Bishop was killed; he went to Trinidad and got the flu so was not present at the key moment when New Jewel was destroyed. When the US invaded Grenada, Stockwell said that US President Ronald Reagan 'likes controversy. It makes him look like what he thinks is a leader'. The US had exaggerated the Cuban presence in Grenada, Stockwell said, as a way to justify the intervention. He knew this stuff from the inside out. Without the input of people like Stockwell or Chuck Cogan, this sort of book cannot be written. Before he died, Chuck met me several times in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at a restaurant and would walk me through his work in the Directorate of Operations in the key years of 1979–84. I was then interested in the 1979 assassination of US ambassador Adolph Dubs in Kabul; Chuck would say, 'Don't touch that; it is too hot.' But then he'd tell me another story, take me down the road into another US-made disaster. This book is peppered with insights I got from these men, who did nasty things, hated talking about them, but were honest enough to say towards the end of their lives that they had helped to make a mess of the world.

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Bouficha, Tunisia

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