

## **Where the world is heading: Failures and prospects up to 2025**

*By Roberto Savio\**

If we were to evaluate the violent events that occurred in the century we have just left behind, it would be a century of horrors. A century with two world wars, with more than 70 million dead, the creation of concentration camps, Gulags, Auschwitz and the Holocaust. The establishment on the political scene of two totalitarian ideologies, Nazi-fascism and Stalinism, translated into a long list of tragedies and suffering. The struggle for world hegemony turned the post-war era into a time of tensions and even greater danger: nuclear extermination. The Cold War affected relations, development and, in short, it cast a shadow over world politics. Paradoxically, it also established a balance and its end led to what Brzezinski had previously lucidly previewed, to the great astonishment of U.S. analysts: the Third World countries, especially those in Africa, which were no longer strategically relevant in the East-West competition, would break out in non-resolved conflicts, with more millions of dead by the close of the century.

In any case, it has been a century in which, in addition to the progress of democracy and of development as essential values, there have been attempts to organize international relations in an organic design. The Society of Nations came into being at the conclusion of World War I and the United Nations at the end of World War II. The end of the Cold War (which in terms of violence can stand alongside the other two), did not see the birth of anything new, but rather has sought to dismantle what already existed. This was a century in which science made it possible to clearly see in what direction we are heading due to climate change and the destruction of the diversity of the species, which led to the major Conference on Development and the Environment in Rio de Janeiro. Nothing was done regarding this issue after the holding of the conference. A century in which the data on poverty and hunger in the world have been as clear and precise as never before. However, the waste continues increasing and currently U.S. dogs and cats eat more proteins than all African children, according to UNICEF. A century in which the awareness of privileges has become clear, but

also the decision by those who have them to not relinquish them. A curious symbol of this contradiction is French presidential candidate José Bové. For the Europeans, he is a progressive model, who defends the farmers from the large transgenic transnational companies; for the Third World farmers he is, on the contrary, a model of the privileges of European agricultural policy, which guarantees to each European cow a subsidy of three dollars a day, more than the income of 800 million human beings. Obviously, an identical cow, but born in the world's South, gets nothing and has to compete in the market with its sister from the North, who on the tenth month, when it goes to the slaughterhouse, already has a dowry of 900 dollars....

We are bringing three fundamental problems with all their complexity to this new 21st century, which in turn opens a new millennium: the international order, the environment and lastly the issue of human rights and justice. A symbol of this transit is the unprecedented meeting of 147 Heads of State and Government at the U.N. (September 6-8, 2000) to approve the so-called Millennium Development Goals (MDG), a solemn effort by Humanity to improve the century we had left behind. The experts in symbols warn us that it is a question of essential instruments for our understanding of the world, whose essential dichotomy is optimism-pessimism. Indira Gandhi, who like all Hindus dominated the mechanism of dualism, affirmed that optimists are pessimists who don't have all the information. Six years since the Millennium General Assembly we begin to have sufficient data to decide whether or not we continue being optimistic. This analysis cannot but begin with a global review before passing on to regional and national levels and finally to Italy.

According to well-known Brazilian political essayist Elio Jaguaribe, political generations last 10 years, as compared to the 20 of human generations. He demonstrates in one of his essays how 10 years are enough to approximately change the political pendulums. These reflections form part of a space of 20 years, which is why they cover two political generations in the new century and we are already close to the end of the first, just three years away from 2010. Of course, from a U.S. domestic viewpoint, George W. Bush's passage through this first decade confirms Jaguaribe's theories.

Therefore, let us see what has worked as a hinge between the last and present century, and thus also try to predict what can happen up to 2020. Out of all the factors, I believe three are

the most useful for an analysis: the Washington Consensus, unilateralism as the foundation of international relations and the surfacing of fundamentalism.

### **Washington Consensus**

This is the term used to denominate the convergence of economic policies that, simultaneously with the fall of the Berlin Wall, have been imposed on the world by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the U.S. Treasury Department as a new model of economic development, with all its political implications. Numerous studies, among them those by the World Bank, have abundantly documented how the policies of structural adjustment have greatly damaged the Third World's most vulnerable economies and the weakest sectors, when to the contrary they should have been the beneficiaries of the Consensus. The decision to dismantle wherever possible state-run institutions and their regulating function led to a reduction in social spending, with serious healthcare and educational deficits as well as the elimination of all social security networks. Meanwhile, borders were opened to abolish all protection tariffs for national products. This while waiting for the big foreign private investments that should have come in to prop up a finally free market. Tanzanian President Benjamín Mkapa summed up very well the experience of many other countries when he pointed out to the Commission on the Social Impact of Globalization, co-chaired by him and Finnish President Halonen and convoked by the International Labour Organization (ILO): "We have privatized the little the State had. Everything has been bought by foreign capital, since we had no national capital that could compete. The foreign companies have closed down almost all the local companies, to transform them into companies for the distribution of foreign products, because they were not competitive, thus increasing unemployment. We have abolished customs tariffs and dismantled our barriers, causing the invasion of Asian products with much lower costs than ours, which have made unemployment increase again. This had been previewed by the IMF and World Bank experts, but they have told us: now the flow of private investment (the famous FPI) will lead to the creation of new competitive and technologically updated companies, the foundation for a modern and lasting development. Nothing gets to us. But when I see China receive 33 times more investments than the ones Brazil receives, how can the fact that the FPI is not equitable surprise us?"

This has made me remember the appearance of Ronald Reagan on the world scene. His first international commitment was the participation in the North-South Dialogue in Cancun, Mexico, in 1981, in the meeting of 21 Heads of State, co-chaired by Mexico's López Portillo for the South and by Canada's Pierre Trudeau for the North. On that occasion Reagan, after having shamelessly affirmed that he perfectly knew the Third World because as the governor of California he had had to do with many Mexicans, for the first time launched the famous slogan of "Trade, not aid". The United States' economic development, he said, had not been achieved thanks to aid, but rather trade. It was a growth totally carried out by the private sector, not by government and much less international aid. The U.S. government, affirmed Reagan, wanted to reduce Official Development Aid (ODA) and strengthen the role of the private sector. And he finished by quoting a Chinese proverb: "What's important is not to give a fish to a hungry man, but rather to teach him to fish."

The Cancun Summit had been deliberately organized without protocol, the participants spoke without a time limit, without a presidency. Fate had it that to one side of Reagan sat Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, who declared himself an enthusiastic advocate of the theories that had just been presented: "I have only one doubt, Mr. President. Numerous fishers live along my country's coasts and the FAO, Norwegian and Dutch mission, and so many countries specializing in fishing have always thought that my fishers, with what they have, are extremely productive and competitive. But we lack the roads to take the fish to the city and to the interior of the country. We lack the refrigeration system to conserve them for several days and therefore the factories to industrially exploit it. If the president knows of some U.S. company that, to invest in a factory, also builds the roads and the refrigeration network, all my doubts will disappear." Reagan then answered that it was the State's duty to create the infrastructure and Nyerere observed that that was exactly what had happened in the United States. Reagan objected saying that it was not exact and the conversation turned into a vicious circle.

Nobel Prize for Economy Joseph Stiglitz observes in his memoirs about his period as head of the economists of the World Bank that very frequently the decisions were made based on an abstract economic model without paying attention to the local reality. The very debated and deposed president of Haiti, Jean Bertrand Aristide, found incomprehensible that the missions of the international financial agencies would present to him a "Mexican-style"

industrialization as a development model for his impoverished island, thus creating the conditions for the “maquiladora” assembly plants, like those that existed on Mexico’s border with the United States, to take advantage of the geographical proximity. Each time he would repeat that industrial growth could only come after a minimum development of education and infrastructure, for which a significant economic aid was necessary. In another Latin American country, Argentina, where these conditions existed, the mechanical application of the structural adjustment imposed by President Carlos Menem led to the destruction of the middle class and to the country’s dramatic impoverishment: a crisis that definitively affected the owners of Italian capital who had invested in State bonds when the sale of all state-owned companies led to a wave of financial growth.

Few times in the history of economic and political theories has one of them seen such a complete boom and such rapid decadence as the free market neoliberalism and its political cosmogony, the so-called neoliberal globalization, advocated by the economists who define themselves along that line of thought. The old liberal theories became radicalized and were improved with a view to the new challenge brought by the world integration of markets. It is not by chance that the term “globalization” began to vaguely circulate as an alternative theory and practice to capitalism just after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of communism. The most singular element of this economic theory is that it was presented during an entire decade not as an element for debate, but rather as a vision with no alternatives, in which even the smallest of modifications could destroy so much perfection. A remember, apropos this, a seminar organized in Milan by the Institute for Relations between Italy and Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, in which the then director of the World Trade Organization (WTO) said to around a hundred participants that there existed trade blocs, such as the European Union, MERCOSUR and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which in about 20 years would merge and therefore the world would change. There would be a single world currency, no more wars, “globalization’s benefits would pour in for all the world’s citizens, fulfilling what the development policy had never been able to do”. When I made the observation that development’s ethical aim was for human beings to be “more”, while globalization’s aim was “to make them have more”, I was told that it was time to leave aside “ethic’s smoke for the fire of reality”. It was also the time in which theoreticians such as Francis Fukuyama thought that that story should be ended,

and even usually cautious politicians such as Henry Kissinger stated that “globalization is actually another name for the domineering role of the United States”.

Today we are witnessing the withdrawal of many of the former advocates of the market’s invisible hand. In addition to Joseph Stiglitz, the best known case is that of Jeffrey Sachs, the man behind Bolivia’s harsh structural adjustment plan and especially of the brutal process of privatization of the former Soviet Union’s economy and the birth of the oligarchy of savage Russian capitalism. Sachs is currently working for the U.N., specifically in carrying out the Millennium Development Goals, and underlines the importance of the State as an irreplaceable element for social, educational and healthcare policies and as a regulator of economic development. This is also the new language of the World Bank, which not again insists on the role of the State, after having spent a decade financing its disappearance.

However, while the Washington Consensus no longer forms part of the economic and political debate and is only maintained as a banner by a few ideologues, the impact it had and has on the world of politics and collective coexistence is not underestimated. This is especially so because the Marxists have already disappeared as credible proponents of economic theories, and the so-called neo-Keynesians, despite having been able to demonstrate the failure of the neoliberal theories, are still not prepared to propose an updated and organic alternative capable of combining the market with social reality.

### **The “single thought”**

Meanwhile, that which Ignacio Ramonet has defined as “the single thought” has been gaining ground. In 1995 Ramonet wrote: “In the current democracy, increasingly more free citizens feel driven by a sort of viscous doctrine that insensibly ends by involving all rebellious reasoning, inhibiting it, disturbing it, paralyzing it and finally asphyxiating it. That doctrine is the single thought, the only one authorized by an invisible and omnipresent opinion police. The constant repetition of this doctrine in all the means of communication, by almost all the politicians, from the right or the left, has such a power of intimidation that it stifles any attempt of free thinking and makes all resistance extremely difficult.” Whoever has tried in recent years to defend terms such as social justice, equality, participation, solidarity, are fully aware that they are viewed as *démodé* romantics.

The problem is that it is not only a question of a debate among connoisseurs. The “single thinking” has created its Tables of the Law, engraved in stone and which we are all called upon to follow, as Riccardo Petrella affirms, or at least the six fundamental commandments. The first decrees as irreversible and inevitable the globalization of finances, of capital, of markets, of companies and their strategies. The second incorporates the “scientific and technological revolutions” of the last 30 years in the field of energy, of biotechnology and above all of information technology and communications. It is necessary to accept commercial applications as deeply as possible, because they are changing human society to give life to a new era, to that of the society of information that guarantees economic growth, full employment and a stable society. The third theorizes that, since the market is the foundation of development and society, each individual, each social group, each territorial community should be better, stronger, victorious. If you are not competitive, others will be and you will be eliminated. This obligation forgives no one: it is not limited to companies, but rather also includes nations, cities, regions, universities, research. The fourth commandment derives from the first three: it is necessary to free national markets to achieve a single world space, in which merchandise, capital and services (but not people) will freely circulate. Therefore, all protectionist mechanisms have to be condemned as “heretic”. The fifth: it is necessary to liberalize all economic leadership and management mechanisms. It is not the State’s task to set working norms or principles through the elected or assigned representative institutions. Therefore, the sixth would be: it is necessary to privatize all the economy and, wherever possible, the social sectors as well.

The commandments and their consequences are present now and will still remain for a long time, notwithstanding the scandals of the Enron and the Parmalat due to the growing gap between the stipends of the CEOs of the companies (with no connection to productivity, as the *Wall Street Journal* has demonstrated) and of the workers of the same companies, which has gone from a ratio of 35 to 1 in 1965 to a ration of 414 to one in 2001.

Somehow the Catholic Church has tried to keep man at the centre of society instead of the market and it cannot be said that it has been very successful. It is significant that *USA Today* published the results of a survey among third-year students of major U.S. economic universities such as Harvard, in which 61% affirmed they would be millionaires before the age of 35. While there was a time when being a philanthropist was considered a moral duty

by a millionaire, today the 60 wealthiest U.S. persons (the so-called *Slate 60*), except for Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, have only returned seven billion dollars in philanthropy out of a total capital 630 billion. This increase in respect for greed is becoming less and less understandable if we take into account that when the interests of capital go beyond a certain amount, it is impossible to use it and therefore accumulation no longer has any sense. In his analysis of *Slate 60*, Professor Austan Goolsbee of the Business School of Chicago used the example of the founder of Oracle, Lawrence Ellison, who was “worth” 16 billion dollars in 2005. With a simple 10% interest, Ellison has to spend more than 30 million every week just to avoid the accumulation of more money. And spending doesn’t mean buying houses or goods since this increases the patrimony. It means spending on food or clothes. And since Mr. Ellison is single, he will never be able to spend 183,000 dollars per hour, meaning he could perfectly give something to charity, which would be considered correct. Meanwhile, a 1992 survey by the government’s Consumer Finances revealed that only 4% of the wealthiest U.S. persons consider inheritance for their children one of the first five reasons to accumulate.

Undoubtedly, the statements from the world of business in recent years open a new chapter in relations between this and the rest of Humanity. It is a question of taking positions that cannot but surprise whoever comes from a world based on citizens’ institutions. I doubt that in the past a delegate manager of a foundation created to “promote business success”, the well-known Carl J. Schramm, would have dared to publish an editorial in which he would affirm that capitalism brings freedom even when democracy staggers, adding that it is the export of company capitalism, more than the export of democracy, what produces a new era of peace and freedom...if the capitalism decanted by Adam Smith could expand to anywhere...the invisible hand would be the secret to achieve global peace” (*USA Today*, June 2006). Regarding this, Mr. Joseph Carducci from Pittsburgh wrote in a letter to the editor-in-chief of *The New York Times* last month about the problems found by the U.S. army in Iraq: Iraq needs a bit of Coca-Cola diplomacy. Despite America’s problems, practically the entire world wants relations with the West, rock music, blue jeans or the Big Macs we provide. The best way to fight an ideology is with another. As can be seen, we have come to identify in the Big Mac an “ideology” that can do what neither the President nor the army are in a position to do. Could Ramonet be right when he expresses his concern about the consequences of “single thinking”?

We cannot worry when we hear a seminar of the American Enterprise Institute (the think tank of the U.S. right) wield the thesis that there is no intergenerational responsibility: we can use all the available resources, without feeling obliged to the future generations. The director of American Fisheries stated that he knew perfectly well that there was too much fishing going on, but this was not his problem. His commitment was to the stockholders and not to the future of Humanity. And Robert Putman, in his essential *Bowling Alone*, on the causes of the disappearance of U.S. associationism, pointed out that the disappearance of the sense of belonging to the community of the formerly local but now globalized city financial and economic companies originated in the decadence of local cultural institutions. Proof of this is the testimony by the great commentator William Pfaff, from the *International Herald Tribune*, who in an interview with the executive director of the largest U.S. insurance company, AETNA, when referring to the case of CBS which had founded a large symphony orchestra as an example of corporative responsibility, answered that, on the contrary, that was a case of betrayal of stockholders' profits.

This point on the Washington Consensus' legacy cannot conclude without mentioning the subject of information as a privileged instrument for transmission. An important process of concentration of the means of communication is being carried out, facilitated by the liberalization of the measures put into force (in the United States as well as in Italy), to defend editorial pluralism. These measures are being dismantled everywhere, with negative results for modern democracy. The number of headlines is decreasing every year and the relationship between publishing houses, economy and politics is increasingly becoming more fragile. A magnificent book by Eric Alterman, *What Liberal Media*, shows how the U.S. public receives more or less 86% of identical messages. Even today, close to 50% believes that Saddam Hussein was involved in the attacks against the Twin Towers. The problem is that dailies are bought by people who have the means to do so and, obviously, almost always have the same point of view. Last March 26's *International Herald Tribune* published an article on Samuel Zell, a real estate magnate (valued at 4.5 billion dollars) who wants to buy the Tribune Company chain ((*Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Baltimore Sun* and another 17 newspapers, in addition to 23 TV stations and the Chicago Cubs baseball team). Why does Mr. Zell want to do this? "I don't especially like or am I interested in newspapers. I buy them to make money." Rumour has it that it is to compete with another real estate magnate, Morton Zuckerman, who owns the New York-based *The Daily News* and *U.S. News & World*

*Report*. It is obvious that the Tribune Company chain will now side with the *U.S. News & World Report's* same vision of the world.

This concentration is done to sell an increasingly less analytical journalism, increasingly more directed at events and not processes. A journalism that chooses famous figures as its main characters, uses increasingly poorer vocabulary and goes after exceptional events and ever shorter news items. Opinions are so standardized that they make dailies similar in terms of what they select and the treatment they give news. In a globalized world, where being able to communicate to the reader the economic, social and political processes becomes imperative, the press is reducing the space for international affairs and the number of foreign correspondents. In 1976 there were 72 foreign correspondents in Nairobi, today there are four. A study by the London University on *Times* reveals that its vocabulary dropped by 15% ever since it was purchased by Rupert Murdoch.

The rage to sell has become the only priority of the ongoing concentration (and competition) process. Of course, it is not a new phenomenon and newspapers have always depended on their sales. But I believe we have never reached what Patrick Le Lay, director of TFI (the most important French TV channel, obviously also privatized) affirms in his book *Les dirigeants du changement*: “TFI’s task is to help Coca-Cola, for example, sell its products. Now, for a publicity message to be received it is necessary for the TV viewers’ brains to be available: this means entertaining them, relaxing them, preparing them between two publicity spots. What we sell to Coca-Cola is the available human brain’s time.” And thus now we, the readers, have been turned into merchandise. If we think that in 2015 spending on publicity in the world per citizen will surpass expenditures for education, we should worry about our intellectual identity, since the “single thinking” will continue its course in the market, with no defence for the reader.

### **The return to unilateralism**

Let’s go on to the second aspect. Quite a lot of information and awareness exists about this subject to speak about it in detail. Suffice it to recall that one of the most immediate consequences of the end of the Cold War was the Third World’s loss of strategic importance. During this period, the balance between the two blocs, East and West, forced everyone to sign international agreements with the aim of isolating the opponent. Even modest countries like Somalia became important (and what happened to this country after

the Cold War is clear) and could move between the two blocs. Actually, the true purpose were the actions against the enemy, not human values, and this is so much so that the West has backed a series absolutely anti-democratic and anti-communist regimes, like the East allied with a series of regimes that weren't even progressive. However, in order to avoid a war, which would have become a nuclear one and due to the resulting "balance of terror" that derived from this, international policy's main goal was only alliances and therefore agreements.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, just a few years before the end of the century, the idea of alliance as an instrument of foreign policy is still valid only for the weakest, or for the nations that like the Europeans still see in war an external instrument of questionable efficiency. It should not be forgotten that the first politician who stated that the United Nations was not an indispensable instrument was Ronald Reagan, who was already seeing a decrease in the Soviet threat and began questioning the U.N. as an organization of democratic consensus. The United States practically rejected the commitments made at the time of the United Nations' creation, opening for the first time a debate on the balanced value of its vote. He did not think it logical that a country that pays 25% of the U.N.'s budget have a vote equal to that of a small nation that paid a ridiculous fee. The United States did not accept being dependent on majorities that counted on paper but had little weight on a world level. After threatening to leave five agencies that declared being against U.S. interests, they sure enough ended withdrawing from one of them, UNESCO, as always followed by Great Britain. Since then, the United States has begun a slow withdrawal from the international agencies that, with the Bush administration, has reached its limit. These events are too well known to dedicate space to them, were it not that we have to recall that unilateralism's strategy has combined with a personality, that of George W. Bush, who has maintained the same vertical behaviour even in his domestic policy. It should be kept in mind that the famous "The National Security Strategy" document of 2002, which advocated the birth of an "American century" and the right of the United States to preventatively intervene anywhere a threat to its supremacy broke out, already explicitly said that executive power should have more power in practice than established by the legislature, precisely to be able to guarantee the indicated objectives.

The immense power of the group of the neocons in the formulation of the “American century” cannot be ignored, but it is necessary to say that the singular personality of the President, triggered off and legitimized starting September 11, has played a very superior role, for example, than Reagan’s, who was in a substantially analogous political and cultural position.

In history it is not easy to run into a country more convinced of its “manifest destiny” than the United States, the country chosen by God to provide the world with democracy and freedom. It’s not frequent to see, as is the case of George W. Bush, a President who always speaks “on behalf of the American people and Humankind”; declares to military cadets that, in the world crisis, the United States was the only surviving example of civilization; and divides the world into good and evil axes, with him as the supreme judge. On the other hand, there had never been a President, much less in the 20th century, who stated: “I trust God speaks through me. Without that, I could not do my job” (July 4, 2004). And much less had a Head of State, for whom listening to his electors is fundamental, stated that he never reads newspapers, or watches the news on TV, because for his job it is necessary to have objective information, which is why he is informed only through his staff members. Dozens of direct quotes show how Bush considers himself gifted with a personal destiny different from others. Only history will give us an objective answer on how much all this has influenced the formation of the United States’ feeling of exceptionality, which accompanies its people since the groups of faithful escaped the ruling religions in Europe and reached American soil as the Promised Land.

Anyone who has visited its citizens, or read its press, is always surprised by this feeling of exceptionality with which they view themselves. Since they are convinced that their country is the most advanced and democratic in the world, the assuredness that what is good for them will always be good for any citizen in the world is strong and sincere. U.S. citizenship was given to an individual from each country in the world in one of the ceremonies for the bicentennial of independence. To get the citizenship it was necessary to make a public pledge in a ceremony presided over by then Presiding Judge of the Supreme Court Earl Warren. The pledge’s formula is undoubtedly unique, because those who pledge commit themselves to forget their own origins and history since they are reborn as U.S. citizens. A similar event is inconceivable, for example, for the Canadian neighbours. Judge Warren’s speech was

significant. He literally said, before asking the candidates to repeat together the pledge on the Bible: “Welcome to the world’s only free and democratic country”, which led to my asking myself what the candidates from countries such as Switzerland and Sweden were thinking at that moment while they were pledging to forget their origins.

The Bush administration has known how to use the tragedy of the Twin Towers to gather around it the people of the United States and international public opinion in general. “We are all Americans” has been the exclamation of European citizens as well as of Brazilians. The President has considered this a show of general backing and has moved accordingly. In short and to close this very well-known chapter, the guiding idea that international relations are based on international law and therefore on reciprocity and consensus has passed on to the return to unilateralism as the guiding idea of international politics. In other words, we go back to before the Suez war in 1956, when it was precisely the United States that stopped the British-French landing to regain the Suez Canal, which had been expropriated by Egypt from the European consortium that managed it. That date is considered as a significant moment in modern history in which the artillery’s force was no longer the element with which to resolve conflicts: instead, it was necessary to open the road to negotiations, to agreements and to treaties, a road that the United States would close again 50 years later.

## **The irruption of fundamentalism**

### **Christian fundamentalism**

Malraux predicted that the 21st century would see a return to religion. It certainly would not appear so, if we take into account that the major religions are losing members, although countries where religion was forbidden, like China and Russia, have registered an increase in faithful. We see two parallel and concomitant phenomena: the great expansion of Protestant sects, aided by Gospel TV programmes and other influencing rituals, within the Christian world and the emergence of militant groups in the Islamic world, ready to make the extreme sacrifice of giving their lives. These two phenomena represent a conditioning of politics, which is perhaps the most visible element of the link between the two centuries.

Let’s begin with Christian fundamentalism. In 1993 the Vatican published a document titled “The Bible as Interpreted by the Church”, which contained this forceful condemnation of fundamentalism:

“The fundamentalist focus is dangerous, because an immediate answer to the problems of life is expected from the Bible...instead of recognizing that the Bible does not necessarily contain an immediate answer to each problem. Fundamentalism is an invitation to a sort of intellectual suicide. It injects in life a false certainty, because it involuntarily confuses the divine substance of the biblical message with what in reality are its human limitations.”

What is true is that the great flourishing of Protestant sects in the United States, also helped by televised preachers -- a colossal upturn in businesses valued at more than 200 billion dollars -- is financing the export of Christian fundamentalism to the entire Third World and especially to Africa and Latin America.

Christian fundamentalism was officially born in 1910, when a group of faithful who saw in the institutions and modern ideas an erosion of the foundations of Christian faith published 12 books, *The Fundamentals*, bringing together 6,000 conservative Christians in the World Association of Christian Fundamentalists in 1919. Its direct interpretation of the Bible as a guide for daily life was always directed at rejecting modernism and any attempt by the State to interfere in the life of citizens. Historian George Marsden has called it “anti-modernist militant protestant evangelism”. But we should say that its practicing faithful have used the new technologies, the market and all the modern instruments in communications as no other social group. In this aspect it has certainly taken advantage of the deregulation that President Reagan introduced in the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) that, since its creation in 1934, made sure that the licenses of the frequencies were distributed with criteria directed at defending “public interest”. Reagan weakened the FCC to such an extent that he made it inoperable, reduced the commissioners from seven to five and the budget to less than half. He named a chairman that publicly proclaimed that “television is no different from a toaster”: it is worth mentioning that for him television was just another household appliance and the cultural impact of radio and television was irrelevant.

It is the market, not politics, that determines who controls television and radio. The result was that in a short period of time a few corporations bought many stations and all programmes, including sports, news and even weathercasts, became commercial. Private interest was able to take advantage of public interest. The fundamentalists took the utmost advantage of this opportunity. Also aided by the state of tax exemption, they created national networks and some of the televised Gospel preaching organizations rapidly became

multimillionaires. And when the FCC referred in 1975 to the subject of religious radio and television, it received more than 30 million letters of complaint, which is why ever since then it has been very careful about interfering in that matter. Today there are 1,600 “Christian” radio stations and 250 similar TV stations.

The impact in the United States has been immense. A 2004 Gallup poll revealed that 55% of the people in the United States believe that the Bible is literally true, including the story about Noah’s ark and the creation of the world in six days. But even more worrisome is that 71% of evangelical Christians, as the fundamentalists are officially called, believe that the world will end in an apocalyptic battle between Christ and the anti-Christ. It is not a question of an abstract debate: the attempts to change the school programmes to eliminate the theory of evolution already exist, in fact, in almost all the states of the Union.

Europe has also witnessed a mass migration toward sects, but not at an even comparable level of fundamentalism. An important part of the fundamentalist community wants to carry out a deep-rooted change in the U.S. government. Pat Robertson and his group called the Dominionists have stood out for the permanent campaign in favour of the United States becoming a theocracy under their control.

They have said several times that democracy is a terrible form of government, unless it is led by the Dominionists. His assistant, Gary North, describes the nation to be developed as follows: “We should use the doctrine of religious freedom until a generation is born that knows that a neutral civilian government does not exist. That generation will at last build a political, social and religious order based on the Bible, which will reject the religious freedom of the enemies of God.” North goes as far as demanding public executions for women who have abortions and for those who support it. An important part of the U.S. people sees the subject of the Middle East only in biblical terms. Its reference to the time when Israel occupies all the territories as the moment of the arrival of the anti-Christ and, therefore, of Christ’s return, takes up a recurrent place in any political focus on the issue.

The analyses on the U.S. electoral trends reveal that today the socially aware conservatives such as Rockefeller are no longer the solid foundation of the Republican Party. According to Stanley Greensberg, Clinton’s pollster, the evangelists make up 40% of the country’s voters but represent 60% of the Republican electorate. This also explains the Dominionists’ backing of Bush since he sees the world in an analogous manner, always in a dichotomy: the

enemies of freedom and the lovers of freedom; of evil and good. Wavering and changing policies would be tantamount to tempting divine favour. What seems stubbornness is ethical coherence. According to Greensberg, the arrival of fundamentalism has irreversibly changed the political scene in the United States.

The same wave has spread everywhere. In Africa, the relationship between fundamentalist religious groups and dictatorial regimes is the cause of numerous conflicts that have covered in blood the continent, from Liberia to Uganda.

The evangelists in Brazil have presented a candidate in the elections against Lula, considered “the Devil’s candidate”. In Guatemala they have had a president of the Republic during a bloody dictatorial period, Efraín Ríos Montt, and in numerous countries they have elected mayors, deputies and senators. It is estimated that if they continue growing at the same rate of the last 10 years, by 2025 they will surpass the amount of Catholics.

### **Islamic fundamentalism**

Muslim fundamentalism’s explosion has been extensive. A consensus is being born among experts about the fact that here it is also a reaction to modernism, or, better said, to the challenges that progress and modernity counters to a literal interpretation of the Koran. The Muslim world, which in the Middle Ages had a higher cultural and scientific level than Christianity, fell behind in its development. It is important to recall that since the Reconquest, concluded by the Catholic Kings in 1492 with the expulsion of the Moors (and the Hebrews) from Spain, relations between Christianity and Islam have always ended in the conquest and colonization of the latter.

This in itself is not enough to explain the economic and technological blockade of Islam. Colonization has had a different development for the former Asian colonies; things have not gone well either for Africa. And Latin America with its independence in the early 19th century was liberated almost 150 years before the rest of the Third World. We should underline that the Islamic world’s frustration has been much greater: ever since the end of World War II the so-called process of decolonization allowed the former colonial powers to place these countries, the object of balkanization, under their spheres of influence. The Islamic countries’ inferiority status has been impressive. The British orientalist school finds in the lack of democratic institutions its principal cause. The lack of these institutions is

attributed to the alleged theocratic tendency of the Koran, although this is the object of debate today among specialists. But what is certain and evident is that less economic development goes together with less development of democracy and a greater economic development (Malaysia is a case in point), a greater flourishing of democratic institutions and of civil society. We should not forget that the Arab world represents only 30% of the entire Muslim world. It is not by chance that in Malaysia and generally in Asia the Islamic parties have never been able to have a decisive weight in politics. The cases of Turkey and Tunisia are emblematic: Ataturk and Bourguiba have accompanied their countries' modernization process with a significant effort to reform their public institutions, given that the two statesmen have wanted to again lead religion under the State and not above it, changing the Sharia for a system of laws and education that combines modernity and the Islamic tradition and ethics.

We should recall that Islamic fundamentalism began taking roots where the lack of democracy came with a shortage of social and economic development. This is valid not only for the Maghreb countries and for Egypt, but also for the Gulf countries and for Saudi Arabia, where the ruling classes' great wealth and corruption led to seeing in Islam a road to social equality. The Islamic fundamentalist groups have been the only ones to deal with social assistance, education and health care, in the absence of the State, turning the denunciation of inequalities into their distinctive banner. The reaction, from Egypt to Algeria, has been to place them outside the law, with the backing of the western world. Therefore it is not surprising that Islamic fundamentalism perceives the West as the big enemy that tries to maintain the status of dependence to steal the raw material and above all the oil. The tragic fate of the Palestinians, in diaspora in many countries and under permanent Israeli occupation, has become the symbol of this western design in the *collective imagery*. The statements by some western leaders, in tune with a new crusade after September 11 and, above all, with domestic ends, confirm this. The western means of communication have practically ignored the great debate that originated around the bill on oil drilling in Iraq. Antonia Juhasz, of Oil Change International, published on March 14 in the *International Herald Tribune* an analysis on how a state-run model, like that of the other Arab countries, goes on to become a totally private model, open to international companies resulting in that the Iraq National Oil Company would have control of only 17 oil deposits out of a total of 80. Neither do foreign companies reinvest their profits in the Iraqi economy; they do not

create joint ventures with local companies to employ Iraqi workers, or share their technologies. Many other clauses have not been accepted up to now by the other Middle East countries and the five Workers Federations of Iraq have requested the solidarity of all the unions of the Islamic world. On the other hand, we have the western refusal to deal with parties that participate in democratic life, like Hamas in Palestine (originally Israel's favourite because of being anti PLO) or Hezbollah in Lebanon and the backing to the Algerian military so that they annul democratic elections and prevent the Islamic Front from coming to power.

It is then that political militancy and the power confrontation appear under the religious ideological guise and fanaticism as its manner of expression. That explains why young people are willing to die in a sort of holy war. It is an unprecedented fact that hundreds of persons sacrifice themselves every year and for every martyr more appear willing to do it. It would be naïve to think that such a phenomenon can be solved only through repressive measures, since this would only increase the conflict and terrorism.

To close this point, I recall that, on the initiative of Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the United Nations summoned a group of personalities ranging from Desmond Tutu to Mohammad Khatami, and substantially reaching these conclusions: the report presented in December 2006 to the secretary general indicates that we are not in the face of a conflict between civilizations, but rather a conflict in civilizations. In fact, the best known phenomena such as that of the Danish cartoons and an Italian minister's T-shirt were not directed at the Arab world, but rather at a domestic debate about the freedom to criticize religions, or above all the immigrants. Moreover, the numerous attacks in several Muslim countries indicate the clash between modernism and traditionalism within Islam: Pakistan is a clear example of this. Perhaps I would not be exaggerating by concluding that we are facing one of the consequences of globalization, which has led to direct and unprecedented relations between the world's different realities. And, since in addition to Christian and Islamic fundamentalism there is also an increase in Buddhist, Jewish and Hindu fundamentalism, as well as the African animism, Malraux' prophecy about the re-emergence of religions in this century should be seen in the long term. It should be taken into account that the agreement for a coalition government between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland demonstrates that peace

always comes at the end of long and bloody processes, when the conflicts have led to the militancy's exhaustion.

### **Change of relations in the framework of international governance**

#### *Emergence of "Chindia" as a future world power*

What are the main changes that await us in the century that has just begun? It is possible to affirm that in the next 20 years predominance will not be U.S. or European, but rather Asian. It is currently being debated whether the future world power will be China or India. For the time being, there is no doubt about China's advantage.

In the last 25 years China has been able to combine national policies and local private enterprise through a programme of economic reforms, using efficient and qualified labour with an economy open to international trade, which has promoted foreign investment and the import of technologies. In 2006 China attracted 60.3 billion dollars, as compared to India's 4.6 billion. According to the UNDP, China's literacy rate stands at 90.9% as compared to India's 60%. In the last six years the proclaimed Indian development registered a respectable increase of the productive index of 4.1% on average, but China's was 8.7%. India, which had a 2.2% participation of world trade in 1947, dropped to 1% in 1980, and is still below 2%. In the last 15 years, the employment rate in the services sector has tripled in China, while in India it only increased 20%. To reach China's level of infrastructure development, India would have to invest at least 150 billion dollars.

The Hindu party (of which Milton Friedman was a member) sees things in a different light. India has the advantage of having companies that have always been integrated to the international economy, ever since the British East India Company colonized it, as the recent offers of Mittal Steel for Arcelor or Chacha Steel for Corus demonstrate. India ranks, in all cases, second in the world in economic growth, after China, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of 3.611 billion dollars. According to World Bank forecasts, Japan will rank third in 10 years. Since 2002 the export rate has grown 20% a year and will reach 92 billion dollars. Despite the fact that the majority of the population has a low educational level, India is, however, the first country in the world in terms of the number of engineers and scientists, and has become the world centre of outsourcing for informatics and data transmission services. Every year it graduates double the amount of engineers as the United States. The

United Nations Population Fund estimates that by the mid century it will surpass China in demographic growth. It already holds fourth place in the world in the production of pharmaceuticals and has great advantages regarding workforce costs. The component of workforce cost is 8-9% in an automobile, as compared to 30-35% in other developing countries, including China. India already has a purchasing power class estimated at 400 million persons, and in continuous growth.

China has growing domestic problems due to its unequal development, which causes more than 70,000 demonstrations of dissatisfaction every year, according to Chinese Ministry of the Interior figures. The country could therefore disintegrate or at least enter a great political instability in the face of an eventual fall of the Communist Party, the only one capable of leading the complex Chinese process. Meanwhile, India has demonstrated its ability to overcome difficult government crises. Finally, the Chinese population is rapidly aging as a result of the policy of one child at the most per family established to control the demographic explosion. Even worse is the fact that a great deal of the population is at risk of not having social security during old age, which creates serious social pressures. Meanwhile, India is still a country of young people: when the work costs increase in the two countries as a result of economic and industrial development, India will have available workforce, while China will have problems to maintain the growth in industry and services, a situation that can already be perceived.

A great deal of the Chinese population believes that India's growth is an invention to minimize China's advances and counteract China's role of first world power it hopes to have by 2025. How else can it be explained that India is authorized to develop the nuclear industry and possibly atomic weapons as well, with no control, while an opposite policy is applied to Iran? Above all, China has 6,000 years of centralized history and is much more ethnically and culturally homogeneous; the lack of a formal democracy prevents India from making decisions and appropriately implementing them. For the Chinese the disappearance of a central power could mean a serious problem for everyone and the Communist Party's policy is designed to avoid this. Therefore, waiting for China to take off or that India can surpass it are only expressions of an undeclared fear.

What created fear in the western world is China's growth and that is why it wants to contain it. Today China has reserves of a trillion dollars as compared to India's 470 billion. In 1975,

India's GDP was 9% higher than China's, while today it stands at 40% of China's. The number of poor in China, which according to the UNDP was 320 million in 1978, has gone down today to 60 million. Moreover, the number of poor in India has decreased from 320 to 300 million, but even so the percentage of poverty is six times higher than in China. The number of undernourished in China from 1979 to 2000 decreased from 304 to 119 million, representing a 60% reduction, while in India the number has remained the same during the same period. Today India has a fourth of the undernourished in the entire world, although 10% of the wealthiest persons are seven times greater than 10% of the poorest, while in China it is 19 times higher. China's inequality coefficient (Gini) increased 50% in the last 20 years, as compared to India's 40%. In China, life expectancy is seven years more than in India, given that the former dedicates 224 dollars to each inhabitant's health as compared to India's 80 dollars; in China the use of the telephone is four times more extended than in India and access to the Internet is three times greater, despite the restrictions posed by censure. Moreover, the Chinese are preparing the next Olympic Games, which should be the biggest in history, as they affirm. During the last Olympic competitions the Chinese team won 63 medals while India only got one. Today there are 460,000 Chinese students in 103 countries and 275,000 from India, out of which 93% self-finance their studies. China has become a major force in the world economy. Every year it recycles the surplus of 124 billion dollars of trade with the United States, in U.S. obligations, turning it into the second holder of the U.S. Treasury's debt. In 2006 it represented 7% of the world oil consumption, 27% of steel, 31% of coal and 40% of cement and will produce 30% of the textiles by the end of this year. In 2010 it expects to export 50 billion dollars' worth of automobiles and this year it bought the last British factory, the MG Rover. China is speeding up the urbanization process and it is expected that 400 million farmers will move to the city before 2020, increasing the urban population from the current 41.8% to 75%.

If Japan came out of the 2003 economic stagnation this was due to the 60 billion dollars' worth of Chinese imports, with a 44% increase. China is today the principal destination of Asian exports, of which it absorbs 31%, while Japan has gone down from 20 to 10%. But the case of Africa is the most emblematic regarding China's growing role. Since 2000 trade with Africa has increased fivefold, reaching 50 billion dollars in 2005. Eight hundred Chinese companies have invested 5.5 billion dollars in 43 countries, ranking third after the United States and France. This economic policy, as compared to the European positions, has been

accompanied by a total lack of interest in the political aspects of the African regimes -- respect for human rights and corruption -- reaching the point of even establishing relations with Sudan and Darfur.

Regarding this, the Chinese say that France has maintained corrupt regimes such as that of Omar Bongo in Gabon or the one of Congo Brazzaville, while the United States has done it with dictatorial regimes such as that of Equatorial Guinea's Teodore Obiang and Angola's Eduardo dos Santos: therefore the West is in no position to teach lessons to anyone. According to the Chinese Communist Party's Department of International Analysis, the signs of concern about its growing role do not go unnoticed. When Paul Wolfowitz was still U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defence he stated to *The York Times* that the road taken by China is disturbing because that country was becoming a superpower and this doesn't mean that China will necessarily become a threat, but if nothing is done it could become one. The 2002 strategic document on the Bush administration's American century said that the growth of U.S. military power in East Asia is the key to confront China's rise as a great power. Richard Holbrooke, former ambassador to the U.N. and advisor to Democratic candidate John Kerry during the last elections, was of the opinion that just like the last century was previously marked by the fight against Nazism and fascism, and later against Soviet communism, China-U.S. relations will leave their imprint on this millennium. And Angela Merkel, when commenting on China-Africa relations, said that Africa cannot be left to the People's Republic of China.... She added that the European policy toward China should not be based on charity arguments, like in the past, but rather on Europe's fundamental interests. China's reaction has been to minimize its international role. In private talks, Chinese executives believe that only when China has solved its domestic problems, not before 2025, can it deal with foreign policy. For the time being, China only wants to trade, help the economic development of other countries through investments and trade. It has rejected all U.S. attempts to discuss economic and trade policies and it systematically ignores any discourse on the problem of human rights and domestic democracy. According to Chinese President Hu Jintao, "We believe the question of human rights should be left to national governments." The theory of non-interference in the internal affairs of a country is still the essence of China's foreign policy.

This brings up an important question: if this tentative date of 2025 becomes a reality, China will be destined to anyway play a role of world power, despite its intentions. When speaking about China Nelson Mandela said that just because an elephant believes it is a gazelle doesn't mean that the other animals will see it as such. Also due to its economic growth Beijing needs an enormous amount of raw material, especially oil, of which it imports 70% of the 5.5 million barrels of its current daily demand. It is believed this amount can even be doubled and it is difficult to think that this does not place it in contradiction with the United States, which regarding this question is especially sensible. Hu Jintao has underlined in private talks that with the current debt rate with China, in 2025 the United States will not be able to pressure them. Neither does he believe that the hypothesis of a military conflict is realistic, in which the United States could not win. China has 680 billion dollars' worth of reserves: it would suffice to exchange them into euros to put the U.S. economy on its knees. The current U.S. leaders' reply is that it is an absurd hypothesis, since China is so linked to their economy and to the dollar that any initiative against the United States would boomerang against the Asian country. Hu Jintao states that while the United States behaves well, this is an acceptable thesis: but if it were to enter into a conflict situation, an economic maneuver against the U.S. Treasury would always cost less than a war.

It is evident that the United States could not organize a war against China without the support of India. In Beijing, the U.S. nuclear agreement with New Delhi is considered from that point of view: helping the Indian giant achieve a military level to check its Chinese counterpart. The reaction has been classical: more trade to increase reciprocal dependency. Trade between the two countries now stands at 20 billion dollars a year, but Beijing wants to double it in four years and has offered to aid India in its nuclear development. Regarding New Delhi, Hu said: "The road we are taking and our development rate have great implications for peace and development in Asia and the world. India and China have a common interest in the advance of multipolarity in the world and in democratizing international relations." Observers have seen as significant that the only time Hu has spoken of multipolarity and of democracy in international relations (a clear reference to the theory of the American century and its unilateralism) was when referring to the common interests of China and India. We would thus be at the outset of a new geopolitical entity, "Chindia", where more than two billion persons would become an unprecedented bloc in history. Why fight against each other -- and much less with others -- if by becoming allies the rest of the

world becomes irrelevant? Given that India has exactly the same energy problems and lack of raw material as China, either they manage this problem together, or a conflict will be inevitable, independently of any external maneuver.

Therefore, how will the world be in 2025? A multipolar world, with China and India as world powers, or just China in the lead? This is the internal debate of the Chinese Communist Party's International Department. It is significant that in November 2005 an essay by an official, Wu Wang, was published under the title "Our interest is to not rock American hegemony". This study indicates that the United States is destined to become a regional power like Europe. However, the latter's foreign relations are less problematic than those of the United States with Latin America, which has no sense of loyalty to the United States. It is therefore better that this change from world to regional power take place gradually and without big leaps, to not cause a crisis in the country, whose economy is to a great extent at the mercy of China. What matters are commercial relations; the era of military domination is over, because it is too costly and inefficient. China's priority is to strengthen its Asian cooperation.

We are therefore facing the possibility of a type of hegemony different from that of the United States, always based on the imposition of certain values and lifestyles. Up to now it doesn't seem China wants to impose on the world its political model or its food, music or lifestyle. China's history is known for its proverbial lack of interest in what happens beyond its borders. The medieval empire was the centre of harmony, outside this were the barbarians, against which a giant wall was built to ward them off. We would be well facing a great commercial empire, where it is probable that according to Chinese traditional culture, its interests will be put before any other, with a total lack of interest for international social justice, or for the fate of the weaker. Or perhaps globalization could lead China to draw up other guidelines.

### **U.S. hegemony's crisis**

In any case, it is to be seen whether the United States will accept this change of leadership without a struggle, even with apocalyptic measures such as the use of nuclear force. This will depend on whether the man in the street accepts the end of his "manifest destiny", of the U.S. historical exceptionalism, with the arrival of a leader with no religion and with a different vision of society, which inevitably leads to a change in lifestyle.

The United States, with 4% of the world population, today uses 20% of the world's resources. This would be impossible without hegemony. And hegemony is already in crisis, although the U.S. people have not become aware of this. The famous military supremacy has been demystified in Iraq. From Rumsfeld's statements, when he had just been appointed secretary of defence, according to whom the United States could simultaneously wage more than one war, it has come to be accepted that opening another front in Iran would be very dangerous: at the most, it could be bombed. The problem does not lie in winning a war, but rather in controlling the occupied territory. On the other hand, since World War II the United States has not won any of the wars it has waged, from Korea to Vietnam.

Gorbachev highlighted that in conflicts the United States behaves like a crocodile that, when it returns to the water, follows the exact same trail it took when it came out, facilitating the hunter's task. In World War II it vanquished the enemy, Japan and Germany, imposed a government, introduced democracy and market economy and everything turned out fine. But Iraq and much less Iran or Afghanistan are not Germany or Japan and it is ridiculous to think they could do the same in China. It is also inconceivable that they can continue increasing military spending indefinitely. McClatchy Newspapers reports that according to the last budget, military spending is the highest since World War II. If the additional 100 billion dollars are approved for Iraq and Afghanistan, expenditures will reach 630 billion dollars, used to finance a war machinery of 300,000 soldiers, present in 78 countries, half of whom are in Iraq and Afghanistan. This professional army has serious recruitment problems. To achieve the required quota it has had to resort to moral exception; that is, accepting persons with criminal records and alcoholics, who represent around 5%, as recruits. These are the soldiers who are responsible for many of the crimes during the occupation of Iraq, according to a January 2007 Pentagon report. The rate of alcoholism in the army has increased by 30% from 2002 to 2005, and a fourth of the interviewees have said they "drink a lot", that is, five drinks in one go. But the spiral of costs continues rising. The Pentagon has an elephant-like structure: according to the 2005 inventory, it has 737 military bases in the world, with a total land area of 2,202,735 hectares and this does not include the 106 military garrisons in Iraq and Afghanistan or the enclaves in Israel, Qatar, Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan and Turkey. The Pentagon has 32,327 buildings in its bases and rents another 16,527 installations.

This non-productive hypertrophy of a war machinery (according to the General Accounting Office of the U.S. Congress, 22,000 shots have been fired for each dead guerrilla in Iraq) is coupled by a progressive decadence of U.S. economic and financial hegemony. The United States contributed 50% of the gross world product in 1950, as compared to the current 21%; 60% of manufactured products as compared to 25% in 1999. Nine out of 10 of the largest electronics and electric companies currently do not belong to the United States. Neither are eight out of 10 automobile producers and gas companies; seven out of 10 of the largest oil refineries; six out of 10 telecommunications companies; five out of 10 pharmaceutical companies; four out of six chemical companies; four out of six airline companies. Out of the 25 most important banks in the world, 19 do not belong to the United States. Out of the 100 most wide-spread international corporations, only 23 belong to the U.S. Since 1971 (except 1973 and 1975), the United States has had a growing deficit in the commercial balance. Since 1990 the balance of foreign investments, which was always positive, has been inverting that tendency: since 2002, for the first time the United States paid other countries for foreign investments more than what it receives from its own investments abroad. In 2002 it was forced to take out a loan from abroad of 503 billion dollars, almost 5% of the GDP. Foreign goods and properties represent today 2.5 trillion dollars more than what it has abroad. In mid 2003, 41% of the country's Treasury market debt, 24% of all its corporative properties and 13% of the shares were in foreign hands. The United States is losing the major part of the cases of international competence settled at the WTO. Even in Latin America, tied to Washington by the Monroe Doctrine (which makes it a region reserved for its interests), in 2000 out of the 35 largest foreign companies 11 were U.S. and 24 European. The situation worsened with the Bush administration, which inherited a budget of assets from the Clinton era, since giant tax cuts and military spending have led to a deficit of 450 billion dollars. This administration's ideological vision at the same time has sought to reduce the public machinery, also increasing the cuts to the States, to which it has attached many social costs. The result is that the States expect a deficit of 60-80 billion dollars for next year, which they can only balance by reducing spending in education, social security, culture, the environment, etc. The domestic inequality rate has significantly grown in 2005, with 1.1% of the wealthiest U.S. people (an income of at least 348,000 dollars) with the greatest participation in the national income since 1928. In other words, the 300,000 richest U.S. citizens have the same income as 150 million of its poorest fellow citizens as a whole; the

gap between rich and poor has doubled since 1980. Ten per cent of U.S. citizens have received 28.5% of all of 2005's income. The figure for this group was 49.3% in 1928, thanks to the policy of fiscal equality adopted by the diverse administrations to be abruptly interrupted by the Reagan administration, which found it at 33%. The "twin deficit" of foreign trade and the budget led to a visit to the secretary of the Treasury by the director general of the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDP) and the World Bank (the Bretton Woods agreement agencies) to express their concern. John Snow's answer was that his country's economy escaped general economic laws, because everyone has invested in the United States and it is in everyone's best interest to not see it in trouble.

The annual polls about the United States' image in the world by Pew Global Attitudes Project (PGAP) reveal a different story. Bush's re-election has been seen negatively in the 16 countries where the survey was done, except Poland. And 11 countries, including U.S. traditional allies such as Pakistan, Lebanon and Jordan, have voted more favourably for China than the United States. Where it has shown an image of solidarity, with the aid given to the tsunami victims, the positive replies surpassed the 15% of two years ago with 38%. To the question of whether the United States takes into account other interests when it defends its own, only 19% of the Canadians gave a positive answer, as compared to 23% in 2003; and only 32% of the surveyed British citizens, as compared to 44% two years ago. It is significant that seven U.S. citizens out of 10 described their country as generally "not wanted in other countries", as compared to the answer to that same question by 94% of the Canadians and 83% of Indian citizens. The low appraisal of the country is evident, when a majority in 15 nations, from 51% in Canada to 85% in France, has said that the world would be better off if a group of countries would emerge as a rival to U.S. military power. In contrast, 68% of U.S. citizens consider that it is best for the world that Washington be the only military superpower. Finally, a large majority of the Islamic world has declared itself worried about a possible U.S. military invasion.

### **And Europe?**

While data indicate a progressive conversion of the United States into a solitary superpower and that its next president, no matter from what sector he/she comes from, will retake to a certain extent the road to multilateralism (for example by signing the Kyoto agreement), it is

impossible to believe that in a short time Europe will be able to play a unitary role on the international scene. The celebrations for its 50th anniversary, rich in symbolism and festivities because of the prospect of the constituent treaty, have not been able to hide the scepticism of a major part of Europeans to relaunch the consensus on the need for a European constitution (even if it was a modest treaty). The reality is that despite individual sacrifice and the collective wellbeing which the adoption of euro has represented, Europe has come to a halt as a political design with the expansion to 27 countries, a process that should continue with many more: Rumania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Turkey, Ukraine and perhaps Moldavia and Belarus. This process was already interrupted by Great Britain's entry after the failure of its project for a European free trade area, and in conditions that today seem inexplicable, like the so-called Thatcher clause, which makes the United States a net receiver of contributions even when Great Britain is in better economic conditions than many founding countries.

The United Kingdom became a part of the European Union determined to turn the latter into a free trade area, but not into a political project. London was not making an attempt to abandon its Atlanticism and its function as a bridge between the United States and Europe. I was able to visit Lord Hume and one day I asked him if Great Britain could someday become really pro-European. He asked me if I could feel for five minutes like a British citizen. And then he asked: "My dear fellow citizen, do you prefer being Germany's second in command or the United States' second in command?" This is why Blair has had no problems in maintaining great friendship from Clinton to Bush, despite evident differences, and his successor will do the same with Bush's successor.

Just a short while after the entry into the European Union of the 15, the International Development Society, of which I was the general secretary, organized at the Vienna Diplomatic Institute a meeting financed by Commissioner for Cooperation Paul Nielsen to present the policies to assist Third World countries. The chairpersons of the Foreign Committees of the Senates and House of Deputies of the new member countries were invited to the meeting. The MPs came together, after having had an internal meeting, and said that the Polish senate had prepared an initial declaration on behalf of the group. The speech was almost word by word as follows: "We would have preferred to enter the United States, to which we owe the fall of communism and our freedom. Obvious reasons prevent

this. We therefore enter Europe, but just to have the means we need to fill the gap that divides us from the rest of Europe, which has grown while we were blocked by Soviet domination. Therefore, no aid to the Third World. All the resources should be for us. When the separation between the two Europes is eliminated, then we will talk again of a European foreign policy.”

At least one political generation will have gone by before the European Union can metabolize the new members, in a still open process. Of course, the Carolingian force, which has always been Europe’s foundation, except for Great Britain, will have the advantage. It is not by chance that France and Germany have retaken the Carolingian line followed by Germany and Poland to find a road to dialogue. In any case, in the end the logic of history and the economy will be able to create a united Europe. But meanwhile the world will have gone ahead and Europe will have lost its opportunity window.

This is also the case because Europe, beyond solving its challenge to the exterior, has to solve an ever more difficult one in the domestic sphere. Its population is rapidly aging, almost like that of Japan, more or less like China. The problem of having an economically active population that maintains old age social security networks (pensions, health care) is, above all, a worldwide problem. One out of every six inhabitants of the planet was European in 1950, excluding the Soviet Union. They will be one out of 14 in 2010 and one out of 17 in 2025; the average age is now 37.7 years, in 2059 it will be 52.3 years. In other words, Europe cannot be competitive without substantial immigrations.

United Nations estimates show that a minimum of 75 million immigrants will have to enter Europe to maintain it viable. These immigrants will all come from the world’s South and will bring with them their cultures, religions and traditions, deeply different from those of Christian Europe. This issue is greatly debated. Up to now, as is known, the European experience in terms of assimilation has not worked out well.

The two roads, that of France’s national integration and Holland’s multiculturalism, have not solved the fundamental problem: either immigrants are given employment and dignity or they will inexorably tend to shut themselves in ghettos. Canada is the most multiethnic country in the world, in proportion to its original population, even more than the United States. But it has always had a controlled immigration policy, making sure that the immigrants are not social misfits. The immigration policy in Europe is not popular because

in each country there is a Le Pen or a Bossi who use the rejection of immigrants for purely electoral purposes. As a result, the European immigration policy is limited to trying to contain the damages, without a domestic cultural policy of immigration, as compared to what has taken place in Canada, where the population has been educated to see in immigration an inevitable need for living positively. It is not by chance that in the elementary schools, where children from all ethnic groups currently sit together, the problem of differences does not exist. It does exist in the society of adults, which would not want Europe to change; a Europe where more children are not born because they represent a high cost and a serious sacrifice. It is true that today, due to the fixed-term contracts for less than 1,000 net euros a month for 27% of the European population aged less than 35 years, which do not make contributions and therefore will not have a pension, having children is increasingly more difficult. Thus children are not born and even the very Catholic and conservative Poland has a negative birth rate. Immigration is seen as the destruction of European identity and the European role happily marches toward a slow decadence, while the United States continues rejuvenating its population through continuous, but planned and controlled, immigration.

In any case, the Europeans seem to see their future more clearly than what is believed. A poll for the 50 years of the Rome Treaty, carried out by the *International Herald Tribune* and France 24 TV channel in Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United States, revealed how the majority of the interviewees believes that the European Union will be alive and strong for another 50 years. Fifty per cent of the Italians, 49% of the Spaniards and 34% of the French and Germans even believe that in 2057 Russia will be part of the European Union and even higher percentages believe it is sure that Turkey will enter. It is significant that while the French (85%), Italians (84%), Spaniards (82%) and Germans (76%) said they were sure that Europe had become stronger and acquired great experience, the percentage of the British dropped to 62%. A great success for the euro: by a broad majority, 93% of the Spaniards and 76% of the British said they were sure the euro will be the only European currency. It is interesting to note that a solid majority, of at least two thirds, expects a new war in Europe in the next 50 years; from 83% of the British to 71% of the French believe that in 50 years English will be the European language. U.S. citizens are less optimistic about the quality of life in 2057 (31%) than Italians and Spaniards (47%) and 72% of them believe the euro will be the European currency. At least two thirds of the interviewees from both

sides of the Atlantic believe that in 50 years relations between the United States and Europe will be worse than today.

### **What can be expected for Africa and Latin America?**

The so-called black continent is about to reach a billion inhabitants. Three generations of leaders have already gone by since independence. While the first was one of visionaries and patriots, the second and third have been characterized by corruption and absolute power. And the third generation is in a stage of extinction. It is unimaginable that Mugabe can live much longer. If the fourth generation were really of young people, there would probably be a change in African policy. But while the nascent African civil society, which almost always emerged under the wing of former colonial powers, becomes strong and forcefully advances the demands for transparency and participation, the values of justice, coexistence, peace and equality, Africa will above all continue being a supplier of raw materials, incapable of competing with the products that come from abroad. In South Africa there were 320,000 workers in footwear factories 10 years ago. Today they are 50,000, after the import of Chinese footwear. The opening to Chinese textiles will also lead to the closing down of a great deal of the textile sector.

Latin America's potential is different. If it is able to consolidate its regional integration process (although Mexico and Central America already form part of the U.S. area of influence), it could have sufficient market for its development. But if emphasis is only placed on the community of political interests of some South American countries, there will be no integration in its broadest sense. And Latin American products, without a large interior market, have no possibility of competing with the Asian markets, like the small producers of toys, footwear and textiles have discovered in recent years.

In short, it is possible to affirm that Asia will become the centre of the world market and, probably, China in the short term. It will either reach an agreement with India (the "Chindia") or will have to face an alliance between India and the United States (in around 20 years Japan will probably be a country in clear decadence because of, among other factor, its population's aging). Whatever happens, an erosion of the United States' hegemony has begun as well as the end of the American century. The same will happen in Europe, especially if it is not able to express a common foreign policy.

The passage from U.S. to Asian unilateralism is separated by a window of opportunities no greater than 10 to 15 years. At this point we will enter an area of conflict and hegemony and we will have a new crisis of multilateralism, destined to become stronger during that period. In the meantime, will the international community know how to resolve the most urgent issues to avoid their becoming an element of conflict in that window that is opening? In my opinion, at least three fundamental areas have to be established on which to urgently work for a sustainable world able to absorb the damages that the current globalization of savage capitalism is producing: what we can define as the MDGs, human rights as the foundation for international relations and the environment.

### **Millennium Development Goals**

They are totally insufficient goals to solve the problems of two thirds of Humanity. These goals are not directed at the roots of the problems but only tend to improve the situation. However, it is the greatest agreement by all the countries of the world, solemnly signed by the Heads of State and Government. This is an important test not just because of what they will produce, but also because they can demonstrate the international community is capable of working together in a constructive way in a global design that is not only economic but also social. In this case, the process of construction would be an experiment and apprenticeship that could change international relations. We have more limited experiences such as that of the eradication of polio and smallpox, which demonstrate that when there is a political will, cooperation wins over national criteria and local interests. In a certain sense, the struggle against AIDS and against SARS is similar to that of the MDGs.

In September 2000, all the U.N. member countries in the so-called Millennium Summit set their minds on reaching by 2015 eight major Millennium Development Goals. They were: reducing the population affected by hunger and poverty in world; guaranteeing universal primary education; promoting gender equality and women's autonomy; reducing infant mortality by two thirds and maternal mortality by three fourths; combating AIDS, malaria and other serious diseases; guaranteeing the sustainable use of natural resources; favouring the creation of a world society for development between the North and the South. To gauge this process, 18 goals and 48 indicators were established. We are in the middle of the period agreed upon and the debates go on about how to carry out the methodology and its indicators in a great many of the countries where there are no complete and trustworthy

statistical systems. However, even more serious is the fact that the beginning of the MDGs is still very far away. The more optimistic estimates indicate that the goals will be extended another 10 years, if the current level of resources is maintained. Obviously, meanwhile the world will be negatively changing if we take into account the current tendencies as an indicator. The UNDP Human Development report shows how today 50 countries are worse off than 10 years ago and the gap between rich and poor is widening. The levels of international aid are half of what they were in 1960, despite the industrialized countries' commitment to contribute 0.7% of their GDP, a commitment they continue eluding. The United States, for example, is close to 0.2%, and its aid is substantially grouped in Egypt and Pakistan, by political selection. Meanwhile, seven years after the Millennium Summit, there are still 1.2 billion people living in poverty, 100 million children who do not go to school, a child who dies every three seconds because of curable diseases, a mother who dies every minute at childbirth and 13 million orphans because of AIDS. To complete the picture, the poor world's net financial transferences to the rich countries are close to 2.39 billion dollars, as compared to a mean 50 billion dollars for Official Development Aid (ODA).

In 2005 the United Nations held the World Summit, designed to review the progress of the MDGs. The meeting confirmed that, with the exception of a few cases, especially China, the MDGs were as distant as they were in 2000. The meeting concluded without the countries committing to a date to reach the famous 0.7% for ODA. Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson, in his speech on behalf of the Group of 77, made up by 132 Third World countries, referred to the continuous financial drain from the South to the North and recalled that it will continue despite the industrialized countries' commitment to increase ODA, reduce the foreign debt and the payment of interests, open its markets to developing countries' producers and encourage private investments. Since the end of World War II, the 10 richest countries in the world have become 50 times richer than the 10 poorest countries.

Of course, since 2000 President Bush and the declared policy of eliminating international structures and agreements, beginning with the United Nations, have dealt a deadly blow to international solidarity, prioritizing the world of economy and finances. It would suffice to recall that with the U.S. Foreign Sales Corporation Act, some 6,000 U.S. companies avoid paying up to 30% of taxes, creating export subsidiaries in fiscal paradises like Bermuda and Barbados, with an indirect subsidy for U.S. government exports. The WTO had to admit

that the European Union was right when it resorted against this formula disguised as a subsidy. It is estimated that tax evasion in the fiscal paradises stand at around 250 billion dollars, without any action being taken by the International Monetary Fund or the countries that authorize these practices. Half of these taxes would be enough to easily solve the problem of all the resources for the MDGs, but for many it is easier to use the United States as an excuse. The honourable exceptions of Norway, Holland, Sweden, Finland and Denmark deserve special mention, given that despite having contributed even 1% they have been reproached for trying to devote funds to initiatives that are not strictly development aid.

But what is still scandalous are the agricultural subsidies, which reached the extravagant figure of 378 billion dollars in 2004. The European Union has spent the most, 143 billion dollars, followed by the United States with 109 billion dollars. In this regard, the WTO member countries made a commitment in 1994 to universally reduce the protectionist trade measures and the subsidies. Ever since that commitment up until 2004, not only have the rich countries maintained the subsidies, but Europe has increased them by 4.5% and the United States by a gigantic 60%.

These subsidies, according to the OXFAM non-governmental organization, make it possible, for example, to sell wheat at 34% of production costs. Since 1980 the prices for wheat have dropped 45.2%, corn 41.6% and rice 61%. These are precisely the products that receive the largest agricultural subsidies. The advocates of the subsidies affirm that the reduction in food prices benefits the poor in the Third World, who can have easier access to food. But this is a shamefully cynical argument. Out of the 1.2 billion persons living in absolute poverty, 75% lives in rural areas. They are agricultural workers, persons who make a living from peaches, forestry resources, very small plots of land. Among these is the 80% of the 852 million hungry and malnourished persons. These are, therefore, precisely the MDGs' beneficiaries, whose numbers should decrease before 2015. Since imported food costs less than the local products, the number of workers who leave the fields increases as well as the number of urban poor. Add to this the effects of the policies of structural repair which, by eliminating customs barriers, have allowed for subsidized food products to enter the market and leave out the small and inefficient agricultural producers who would join the ranks of the poor and undernourished. The result is that in 1990 the less developed, poorest countries spent five

times more on food imports than the income for their exports. And despite the fact that food production is constantly growing in the world, the number of hungry and malnourished reached the figure of 852 million in 2005.

The real reason for hunger is the lack of access to food and this happens because the poor do not have the money to purchase it. In other words, hunger is a result of poverty. Giving back space to agricultural production in rural areas is fundamental to reduce hunger. Agriculture, especially for subsistence, is of great social importance. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) provides overwhelming figures: agriculture guarantees 60 to 75% of the rural labour force; subsistence food uses close to 62% of the arable land; the rural poor are the ones who care for their subsistence. In 2004, 57% of the total Third World population depended on agriculture and 49% of this population depended on subsistence agriculture. It is obvious that the beneficiaries of agricultural subsidies defend the need for maintaining them in agriculture, since the big agribusiness consortiums could not compete without subsidies. But an analysis of European agricultural subsidies reveals a different story: 58 farmers have received in 2004 more than 27 million dollars in European subsidies. Queen Elizabeth receives each year 700,000 dollars in subsidies and Prince Grimaldi of Monaco 300,000. It is not a question of aid to small farmers. France receives more than a fifth of the subsidies: but 15% of the French agricultural companies benefit from 60% of the total assigned to France, while small farmers only get 17%. It is alarming that the Commission cannot provide the list of the beneficiaries of these subsidies for the simple reason that the countries are against this, especially France. Minister of Agriculture Dominique Besserau has said: "If transparency is introduced into agriculture, we will have to expand it to all European affairs." In addition to increasing citizens' trust in European institutions, it is clear that the publication of the beneficiaries would not have a positive effect on the citizens who would confirm that they are paying taxes for the big companies. It is not by chance that the Slow Food movement has advocated transparency in agricultural subsidies, so that especially the small farmers get this information. A school of thought is being born that demands a stop to giving subsidies to produce food for export and thus benefit small farmers so they can keep alive their identity and the production of quality and organic food, etc., eliminating in this way international distortions.

Therefore, progress cannot be made in carrying out the MDGs without an increase in resources -- which is not seen on the horizon -- and without erasing the international distortions currently created by trade. While with the policies of structural repair we have been able to eliminate the protection tariffs of the Third World's fragile economic realities, we continue defending the interests of the industrialized world. Evidently, this interpretation that the invisible hand of the free market solves everything is not valid for the world's South.

According to the United Nations, the world population will grow another three billion by 2050, especially in the Third World. The demand for food in these countries will substantially increase. This will allow for promoting the creation of local agriculture, feeding at least the rural populations, creating transformation industries and transportation structures to the cities, where subsidized food does not reach their markets. This is the hypothesis being worked on by the IFAD, the Cinderella of United Nations agencies and which is viewed with great reserve by the big food producers because of its socioeconomic analyses, given that according to their criteria, by listening to the poor one can become infected with ugly customs such as the one of having different views on the rich...and of course the perception of people who look through the barrel of a gun is different from those who look through the sight....

### **Human rights**

The other fundamental challenge is to make human rights a landmark of international relations. The Bush administration has said much about this and has done little or nothing. The United States does not recognize the International Court of Justice for fear that one day it can try a U.S. citizen. It has reached the point of withdrawing bilateral aid to countries that have refused to sign a treaty where they commit to not trying a U.S. soldier, who can only be processed in U.S. courts. It has introduced practices contrary to the Geneva Convention, of which the United States is a signatory, such as the return of prisoners to countries in which torture is normally practiced, to thus officially clean its hands. It has opened the Guantánamo base to prisoners accused of terrorism, to have them on their soil and thus subject them to procedures established in the United States. The government has openly said that the Geneva Convention on prisoners of war is obsolete and not applicable to cases of terrorism. Moreover, it preaches respect for human rights as an element that distinguishes its foreign policy but conveniently closes its eyes about Chechnya and the Muslim minorities in

China. This road was initiated by Reagan, with the refusal to recognize the authority of The Hague Court when it condemned the United States for having mined Nicaraguan ports. A simple statement has now been added: the United States does not accept being subject to any legal mechanism that is not national and human rights is not of value for the enemy. But it is impossible to apply human rights with national interpretations. If so, China, Russia and other countries could use the same exceptions as the United States.

An interesting debate has been opened in the United Nations Council of Human Rights about the possibility of including in the MDGs objectives for the application of human rights using the same mechanisms of control and measures. For example, Brazil proposes introducing the elimination of the death sentence, torture and racism. The elimination of discrimination because of religion, gender or sexual preference should also be included, although an agreement on these issues is still rather far away, as the Brazilian delegate stated. It would be easier to achieve a consensus on the elimination of modern forms of slavery.

It is an interesting road: it is evident that if an agreement on human rights is not reached in a short period of time, the lack of governance will increase in the future, especially taking into account the change taking place in Asia. This region does not have a tradition regarding this issue and it put up strong resistance during the 1994 Vienna Conference of Human Rights, alleging that this was a typically European concern. We have 20 years to reach an international agreement while Asia is on the road to becoming a new power. Of course, international agreements are not in force during wars and dictatorships, but in an interdependent world they create norms of behaviour and points of ethical and juridical reference for citizens. And while maintaining occupation armies is always expensive and in the long term never works, having global juridical instruments as a reference is always a guarantee of a more transparent world that is more aware of what should be its ideal order. If this concept forms part of citizens' heritage, it becomes a serious problem that the dictatorships and authoritarian hegemonies can only overcome with a greater force, which leads to reducing the historical period of hegemony, as the case of the Bush administration demonstrates.

## **Environment**

The third challenge is undoubtedly the solution of environmental, biodiversity and energy problems and all related issues. Aside from the opinion of the U.S. authorities, 95% of the

scientists in the world are already convinced that climate change is related to human activity on the planet. It would seem an obvious assertion, but when President Reagan said that industry did not produce pollution but rather the trees, his country's corporations turned a blind eye to not put at risk their profits. An emblematic case is that of Exxon, which has financed the American Enterprise Institute, the U.S. right's think tank, offering thousands of dollars to anyone who would write articles contradicting the last report of the Intergovernmental Climate Task Force, which is made up by 2,500 scientists. The high number of persons in power-related job posts who do not want to see where the world is heading in exchange for short-term profits is surprising.

Time can only increase the problem if drastic measures are not taken, which politics is not in a position to propose. Suffice it to think about the well-known case of the United States, where no government has tried to introduce a tax on fuels. And where all the empty office buildings stay lit up the whole night because that is the U.S. lifestyle. The lifestyle that President Bush Sr. claimed for when he declared the Gulf War: they want to change our lifestyle and "we will not tolerate it". The lifestyle of those who if they buy a hybrid electricity-gasoline powered Toyota will not get any tax discount. But if they buy a SUV that consumes one litre per six kilometres, then have a discount, because gasoline is expensive and the State helps them buy it. It is therefore not by chance that the entire Washington team, from Bush to Cheney, from Rice to Gonzalez, has worked for oil companies....

The world population continues to grow, although not as much as it was thought in the 1950s. Where wellbeing has arrived, the number of children has drastically decreased. A case in point is Canada, which has gone from a mean of five children per family in the early 20th century to less than two at present. Population growth will especially take place in the Third World. It is estimated that we will go from the current six billion to nine billion in 2050. The Population Research Bureau's estimates for 2050 (they are not available for 2025, which is the limit for these reflections) are 1.6 billion for India, followed by China with 1.4 billion. The United States will have 420 million, Indonesia 308 million and Nigeria 307 million. Russia, today with 144 million, and Japan, with 128 million, will be excluded from the list of the 10 most populated countries in the world. And Europe? It is the only region in the world whose population will decrease, going from the current 728 million to 668 million in 2050. If we take a good look, here we are not speaking of the European Union, but rather the

continent. And to return to these comparative data, in Japan only 14% of the population is aged less than 15 years and in Europe it is 15%, while 19% is aged more than 65 years. However, 50% of the Nigerian population is aged less than 15 years and only 3% is older than 65.

What an end to the demographic explosion! If the fertility rate remains the same, which means that the current scenario of poverty and underdevelopment would remain in the Third World, in 300 years the world population would be 134 trillion persons and the density per square kilometre would be larger than that of Hong Kong, with 100 persons per square metre. Does this debate exist in politics and in the means of communication? However, if it were to decrease to a bit more than two children per family, in 300 years the world would have more than 36 billion inhabitants. And if it were to decrease to less than two children per family, in three centuries the world would only have 2.35 billion inhabitants. These are obviously two very different survival hypotheses, because no one is capable of forecasting what society will be like in 300 years. In the specific case of Italy, if the current fertility rates were to stay as they are now, in 300 years the country would go from the current 58 million to 600,000 inhabitants.

But let us return to the present. FAO estimates say that there are no problems to produce food for nine billion persons: as always, the problem lies in distribution, people's access to food. Let us recall that when the FAO Food Security Conference took place in 2000, the United States accepted that the right to food as a human right be included in the final document, but under the condition that duties not be mentioned. And here we return to the MDGs. How is it possible to see a world without conflicts if the problem of hunger and poverty is not solved, with appropriate demographic changes? If today we have 1.2 billion persons living with less than one dollar a day, what would happen if, based on current data, they would become 2.5 billion in 2050? Because, as we have seen before, the increase in population will especially take place in the poorest rural areas, which are the most affected by the current system of commercial exchanges and agricultural subsidies.

Let us take relations between the two future giants, India and China, the "Chindia", and their impact on the environment. Today the two countries are among the four largest producers of carbon dioxide, which is mainly responsible for climate change. The Worldwatch Institute, which specializes in mid-term forecasts, points out that what characterizes the

current situation is the attitude of some countries of maintaining their own economic development without paying attention to the environment. The United States presently consumes three times more cereals per person than China and five times more than India; carbon dioxide emissions are six times greater than in China and 20 times more than in India. But if India and China were to consume a similar volume of natural resources and had the same level of contamination as the United States, we would need two planets like ours to maintain the two economies.

Let us see some of the problems:

- **Water.** China only has 8% of the planet's water, for 22% of the world's population. In India, the urban demand for water is expected to double by 2050 and the industrial demand will increase threefold.
- **Energy.** India has doubled the 1992 consumption of oil and China, which used to be self-sufficient in 1990, is the second importer of oil in the world since 2004. They are the only two countries whose energy system is dominated by coal, which provides two thirds of the energy consumed by China and half of that used by India.
- **Food.** If current consumption of cereals per inhabitant in China doubles, nearing the European levels, the country would need 40% of the world's cereals.

To better explain how much climate change affects human settlements, in a cause and effect relationship, we will give two examples: the impact of the increase in sea levels and the water problem.

There is obviously a still unfinished debate about how much the ocean level will rise as a result of the melting of the glaciers and their displacement. For the time being, what is sure is that we have gone from 51 km<sup>2</sup> a year since 2000 to 150 km<sup>2</sup> a year. On the other hand, there is consensus about the fact that we are at the warmest period of which there are archive data. It is believed that by 2025 the sea levels will increase between 80 centimetres to one metre. The more pessimistic speak of three metres.

Be it as it may, it is the fate of the current 643 million inhabitants who live along coastal areas. Out of the 180 countries with low-lying coastal area populations, 70% have urban conglomerates on that coast. To be more precise, the world's largest cities, the ones with more than five million inhabitants, have a fifth of their population and a sixth of their

territory in low-lying coastal areas. To have an idea of the global dimensions, the low-lying coastal areas only represent 2% of the lands, but they are inhabited by 10% of the population and 13% of the urban centres are located there. For example, 70% of the population of Bahamas, Holland and Suriname is at risk; numerous republic-islands such as Seychelles would completely disappear. This prospect has led the countries at risk of extinction to meet in an informal group based at the U.N., which former U.S. ambassador John Bolton, one of the neocon falcons, has downgraded by saying that they are so few that they can all go live anywhere in the world and no one will notice.

The data by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are well known. The mythical 2025 again is the last possible date before irreversible damages take place. Carbon dioxide emissions due to fuel have reached the record figure of 6.25 million tons. Just China creates a coal station with old technology every week. However, the damages due to climate change have set another record in 2006: 60 billion dollars. This should make us think that since the times of the industrial revolution until today the earth's temperature has increased 0.5%: if we continue not taking measures, at the end of the century the increase in temperature will be from a minimum of 1.5% to a maximum of 4.5%. The fast disappearance of corals is the saddest consequence of that tendency.

All this was obviously known a long time ago although without all the data that the 2,500 scientists of the IPCC have collected now. Already in 1992 the Rio de Janeiro Conference on the Environment and Development not only analyzed these issues but also approved an action plan, the so-called Agenda 21. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, on the initiative of Canadian Maurice Strong, creator of the United Nations Environment Plan, 20,000 representatives of civil society participated in the Rio conference. Even George Bush father, who like a good Texan related to the oil business had ignored the preparatory stages, was forced to participate as a last-minute decision.

The Kyoto Conference was held at the end of the Clinton administration, with a modest project that consisted in taking in 10 years carbon dioxide emissions to the level of five years before. George W. Bush has refused to sign the agreement, creating a vicious circle typical of the governance crisis we are going through. Bush affirms that there is no sense in signing the agreement if the developing countries don't also sign it, especially China and India, which have dramatically increased emissions. Their reply was: Up to now you have built industrial

development without respecting the environment, and now that you have finished, you don't want us to do our bit? And the millions of poor who we have to save? In addition, you stubbornly continue producing 17 times more pollution than us. In the midst of this vicious circle, politics has perfect excuses to continue postponing solutions, doing nothing. Meanwhile, two billion persons in the world do not have access to electricity, deforestation continues and low-quality and highly polluting fuels are used, such as kerosene. It is impressive to fly over the island of La Hispaniola, since from a plane borders are usually invisible. Those that separate Haiti from the Dominican Republic are visible: on the Haitian side there are less trees, all of them have been felled to cook.

Water is the other example. There is already talk of possible wars over water, not just over oil. In the world there are 1.2 billion people who do not have access to a sufficient amount of water to cover basic needs. If things are left as they are, by 2025 this figure will climb to three billion. The implementation of the MDGs cannot be perceived without solving the water problem. Politically, a "brilliant solution" has been found: at the behest of the World Bank, there are plans to privatize the old municipal companies throughout the world with inefficient management because they do not renovate the installations due to a lack of large-scale economy that only big international companies can contribute. Thus, a common good has become a market good (in fact, even the discovered human body parts are being patented thanks to the Genome project) and it has been seen that the budgets of the large transnational companies have multiplied their profits in recent years. Do citizens have greater access to water?

Solving the problem of access to water evidently has a price now: 10 billion dollars a year. It is the cost for military spending in five days. The Iraq War would have financed until now 30 years of water for 1.2 billion thirsty inhabitants of the world. The United Nations Council of Human Rights is promoting a study on how to regulate equitable access to water according to human rights international laws. Meanwhile, a major mobilization in that sense is already taking place in Uruguay. In the six World Social Forums held up to now, from Porto Alegre to Mumbai, from Caracas to Nairobi, the subject of water has gathered numerous organizations that under the guidance of Riccardo Petrella have approved a platform for the defence of water as a common good that cannot be regulated solely by the market. Obviously, in Davos that platform has been viewed with the same enthusiasm with which

skiers see avalanches, and meanwhile nothing is done regarding this at the level of international agreements.

### **Political deficit**

Because of all the aforementioned, it is evident that there is a serious political deficit. The problem we have is designated by a euphemism: lack of political will, which makes us think that if politicians wanted, they could.

It is licit to have many doubts about that proposal in a globalized world. While the problems were restricted to nations, politics could resolve what was decided. But now, politics' ability is reduced by many factors. Above all, global problems cannot be solved at a local level. The measures taken could be effective only if they form part of a global plan. Without going too far, the case of the MDGs is emblematic of the commitments unanimously made by all the Heads of State. The truth is that finances have gone ahead of the economy (the flow of capitals roaming the world, between the stock market and financial transactions, is five times greater than the flow of capital from the production of goods and services during any day of the year). There are no rules or controls for financial flows. At least the WTO, which even with all its limitations has normative power over trade, although unbalanced in favour of the powerful, exists for the trade of goods and services. Nothing similar exists for capitals. Suffice it to keep in mind that the payment of 250 million dollars a year in taxes is avoided in the fiscal paradises, according to International Monetary Fund estimates. One hundred of them would be enough to solve the MDGs, including the subject of water. Without a unanimous agreement the fiscal paradises will continue existing. And if they still exist it is because certain countries such as the United States, where financial power has a decisive weight over politics, opposes each attempt to establish regulations and controls. It is estimated that the electoral campaign of a U.S. senator costs two million dollars a week and that for president of the United States five million dollars. As it is improbable that all citizens have this "war treasure", it is inevitable that corruption will go on.

We should add that a ruleless globalization such as the current one is above countries and governments and not below them, as international agreements have stated. Consequently, although in different ways for the strong and the weak countries, there has been an erosion of national parliaments' ability to decide and therefore of politics also. The speed and force of events are well superior to the traditional machinery of diplomacy and the other

mechanisms with which the State can act in the globalized world. Finally, there is a deep crisis of the State-nation concept, born of the Westphalia treaties, which previewed the power of the State over a certain territory and over the inhabitants therein restricted. The democratic process through which a consensus is reached on the work of the State and its public institutions, unions, industrial federations, parties, national associations of farmers, craftspeople, etc. during a debate of the residents of a specific place is based on the Westphalian concept. The Westphalian State has been incapable of managing the conflicts of ethnic and religious minorities. The establishment of artificial borders in Africa, for example, according to colonial distribution agreements, is the foundation of almost all the current conflicts, and not only in Africa.

To conclude, there is a new problem for politics: its self-reference in the absence of a scenario of wide historical perspective. According to the historical framework in which the disappeared ideologies emerged, they had an integral and organic vision of a final design of society. We are not only speaking of Nazism and communism, but also of socialism and Christian Democracy. The concepts of “right” and “left” indicated not only different models of social organization but also commitments and values that moved citizens toward a deep-rooted commitment, at times also toward struggles. This was accompanied by the conquest of power, and the total negation of the other.

Today ideologies disappear superseded by pragmatism, politics, because of a lack of deep-rooted values, has headed toward a mechanism of procedures to reach agreements on the quotas of power that will make it possible to manage the crises, which on the other hand are presented as recurrent. Politics has been increasingly less based on participation, tending to become an increasingly more self-referent activity. At present, the conflicts that democracy is called upon to solve are those of power, which it has created itself, based on the coordination of the political forces. Thus a repeated phenomenon emerges: the solution now proposed to resolve a matter is the new conflict that has to be solved in the following stage. In this way a new and difficult to undo vicious circle is born: the circle of the adjustments and readjustments of power, within a reality that is ever farther away from the population’s daily life. The bankruptcy of the ideologies of the last century, the lack of their updating, has made all political institutions first enter into moderation, later into scepticism of the ideological values, finally turning toward the pragmatism of political action.

Ideological dissolution and pragmatism are two elements that prevent political actors from adequately reading society in its multiple dimensions. One could refute that the lack of ideologies would allow a more objective reading of reality without the ties of philosophical and political interpretations that have divided the world in the last century. But intelligence needs categories and intellectual method to be able to understand reality. The current political leadership affirms that pragmatism leads to realism, but what pragmatism does is evaluate reality according to its functionality, to its utilitarian dimension. Everything that does not work according to the criteria of efficiency of the pragmatic paradigm is excluded by definition.

We have thus passed from practice to a utilitarian pragmatism. This leads citizens to feel manipulated, to live in growing scepticism and the birth of a generalized feeling about the uselessness of political action and participation. It must be added that the fact that political institutions are increasingly closed machineries has given rise to the birth of the mass phenomenon of civil society.

### **Pragmatism and idealism**

The emergence of civil society is a singular and new phenomenon that goes beyond the old associationism that was always contained in a framework of ideological reference, like musical, sports or recreational societies. It is made up by millions of citizens of all ages who want to contribute to a social action but do not want to do so within the political institutions. It represents the reaction of idealism understood as the hope to solve human beings' most urgent problems, against the utilitarian pragmatism, against the market as a power that solves social problems. It attempts to place human beings as the principal actors of society. It frequently does so in a confused and not very productive way, not in action but rather in the relationship with the work of political power that is the final instrument of the State and of society. However, without volunteers, hospitals, for example, could not work and the elderly would be abandoned to their fate. Without volunteers, from physicians to agricultural experts, the life of millions of inhabitants in the most depressed areas of the world would be even more terrible. If a study were made, it would reveal that the volunteers, civil society, have done more to achieve the MDGs than States. On the other hand, what would happen to the MDGs without civil society's campaigns, without Bono, Soros and Bill Gates?

It is necessary to work along those lines if we want to create true international governance. Governance that can be created only based on the values that don't need to be invented, because last century they were considered the common heritage of politics: the values of solidarity, social justice, equality, participation, respect for others, coexistence and tolerance. Today globalization's values are profit, competition, market, success. They are values that have a sense and force. But they are individual, not social values. And if we have to create a world and sustainable governance, we also need social values. For example, it is necessary to correct the important issue of security, the security of States, of human beings, which should be seen today in a global manner, based on reflections, information and the challenges previewed for the next 20 years.

Real security is to give each human being employment, dignity, education, healthcare; in other words, to make human rights the cornerstone of world governance. It would be enough to give 1% of the expenditures for military security to human security to go from a unipolar to a multipolar world, so that a scenario is created of lasting relations that overcome possible dictatorships and selfish hegemonies. Because, wanted or not, human being are the ones who make history and lead it. Will we be capable of meeting that challenge, the six billion we are now? If this rediscovery of values continues, it would be possible. Otherwise, when we are nine billion it will be even harder, because the shortage of goods and resources increases the conflicts and does not reduce selfishness.

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